Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Review

Final Assessment Report

Northern Rockies Geographic Area Fires

August 26, 2003

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LARGE INCIDENT STRATEGIC DECISION AND ASSESSMENT OVERSIGHT REVIEW

Assessment Report

Northern Rockies Geographic Area Fires

USDA Forest Service
National Park Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Department of Lands
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
North Dakota State Forest Services

August 26, 2003

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MEMORANDUM August 26, 2003

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TO: Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry, USDA-Forest Service

FROM: Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Review, 93 East, 93 West and Central Montana Area Command Fires

SUBJECT: Report of Findings

Attached is the final report of the Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Team's (Team) review of the Northern Rockies Geographic Area fires. The review includes a list of findings and recommendations in response to the five tasks identified in the Team's Delegation of Authority and the objectives identified in Forest Service Manual 5194.02.

The Team reviewed several incidents under the two Area Commands stationed in Missoula (93 East and 93 West), and one Area Command stationed in Bozeman (Central Montana). The Team also looked at certain Area Command functions and cost-related decisions by the Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NRMACG). Overall, this complex wildfire situation appeared to be well managed by the Agency Administrators, NRMACG, Area Commands and Incident Management Teams involved, especially given the limited resources that were available to them at the time of this Team's review.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Steven A Ellis

STEVEN A. ELLIS
Lakeview District Manager
Team Leader, Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Review

Enclosure

Executive Summary

The Washington Office of the USDA Forest Service convened an interagency Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Review on August 19th, 2003. The Team conducted a series of interviews, document searches, and research and analysis on August 19 – August 24, 2003.

The Team completed the oversight process on August 25th, and a summary follows:

- Land and fire management objectives for the Forests were well integrated into the development and implementation of the Wildland Fire Situation Analyses (WFSA). Lowest suppression cost alternatives were selected for all fires that the Team reviewed.
- Suppression costs for most incidents appear to be reasonable, given the circumstances that Agency Administrators, Area Commanders (AC's), and Incident Commanders (IC's) were dealing with. Some incidents will warrant a regional review based on unit costs bring significantly above the average. The large number of fires over an extensive area, the scarcity of firefighting resources, inaccessible terrain, and extreme burning conditions largely dictated success and cost outcomes.
- Cost containment objectives were well understood by Agency Administrators, AC, and Incident Management Teams (IMT's). Regional leadership was actively present and engaged in providing direction and oversight.
- The WFSA process does not fully address the analytical and decision needs of the agencies during multi-fire episodes.
- All Delegations of Authorities contained some sort of cost containment objective. The accountability and suppression cost implications of Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) Group command authority requires greater coordination between Agency Administrators and the MAC Group decision process.
- Cost apportionment as a policy issue needs further clarification and direction. The emphasis by federal agencies on structural protection and "point of control" strategies clearly results in them being a primary source of fire protection in the wildland urban interface.
- Contract crew costs significantly increase suppression costs of individual fires. A comprehensive analysis is needed to determine if contract crews are cost effective in the long term. In this review, contract crews were found to have filled a suppression resource need when there was no other apparent source of firefighting crews.
- Availability of the Contracting Officer Representatives, the number of buying teams, and the availability of administrative support personnel was not adequate given the level of accountability expected. As the level of contracting activity increases, greater administrative resources will be needed on these incidents. This is a national issue, requiring a national, interagency solution.
- Rehabilitation plans should consider the long-term management objectives for burned areas, delineating a strategy to capture the investment of suppression costs for long-term ecosystem restoration. Identification and prioritization of funds to maintain low fire-risk condition class may be a cost effective, long-term strategy.
- Problems with the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS) contribute to higher suppression costs. Rapid response technical teams for IMT support should be routinely dispatched especially on large, complex incidents. Increased familiarity, training, and support will significantly improve the functionality of ROSS.

- For Area Commands and IMT's, there are increasing adverse impacts on home unit duties, families, and individual careers due to a long season of assignments, including many non-fire incidents. Alternative strategies to provide relief and support are needed to address the increasing utilization of teams for non-fire events as well as extended seasons of numerous assignments.

Introduction

More attention is being focused on the high costs of suppressing large and complex wildfires. Such costs are under much greater scrutiny by the Agencies, Congress, the Office of Management and Budget, and the public. Over the long term, it is clear that treating hazardous fuels and aggressive initial attack contribute to reducing large fire occurrence. By doing so, we will reduce overall wildland fire suppression and rehabilitation costs. In the short term, it is important that the highest level of management expertise is applied to all facets of wildland fire management, and at every level of fire complexity. The Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Review is an attempt to validate that effective decision-making enables implementation of incident objectives while assuring that cost-saving actions are being considered and implemented as appropriate.

Objectives for the review are (Forest Service Manual 5194.02):

1) To evaluate the results of fire suppression actions on an individual fire or in a multiple-fire situation, and to compare these results with those anticipated from the planning process.

2) To identify needed changes or corrections in policy, management, procedures, equipment, or performance.

3) To improve employee effectiveness through participation in the evaluation and implementation of recommended actions.

4) To provide strategic decision and financial management review on large incidents.

Purposes for the review as listed in the Team Delegation of Authority:

1) Ensure the strategic decisions made by the incident and Area Command teams in relationship to the local Land Management Plan, Wildland Fire Management Policy, and Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA). Ensure that the WFSA includes a least-suppression cost option.
2) Examine the Delegation of Authority given to the Area Commander and the Incident Commander. Ensure that cost containment direction is a part of the Delegation of Authority and that the teams are adhering to agency cost containment policy and objectives.
3) Ensure that the appropriate line officer is involved in financial oversight and strategic decisions.
4) Ensure that cost-saving actions have been implemented. The Team will address costs as they relate to the WFSA, strategies, tactics, cost share agreements, contracts and purchasing.
5) Evaluate the incident costs with respect to strategic decisions, political and social issues, and use of personnel and equipment.

The Team also utilized the USDA-Forest Service Fire and Aviation Action Plan (2003), and the Department of the Interior Fire and Aviation Operations Action Plan (2003).

A list of the Team members and a list of personnel interviewed by the Team follows the conclusion of this report.

Basic Incident Facts and Chronology: Northern Rockies Geographic Area Fires

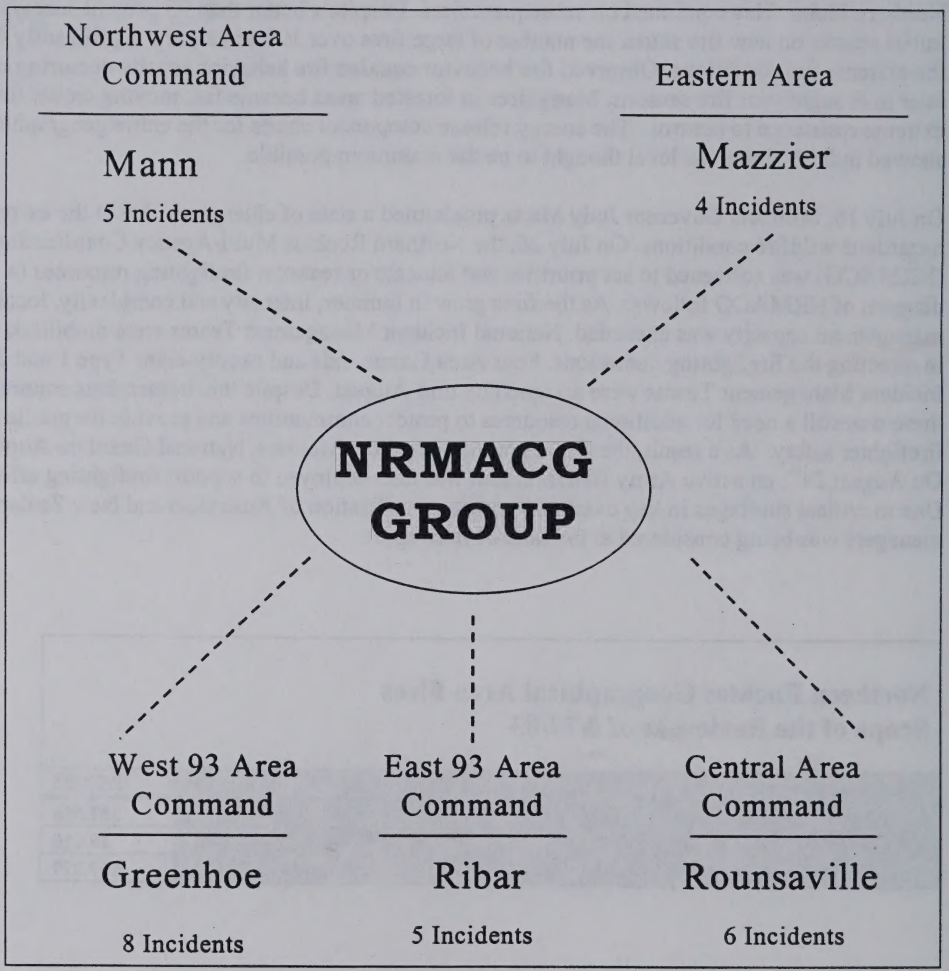
In 2003, the Northern Rockies Geographic Area was in its fifth consecutive year of drought. By early summer, the area was experiencing fire danger levels that exceeded historic levels. Extreme fire behavior was observed on the fires that began in early to mid July in western Montana and Northern Idaho. This continued on subsequent fires. Despite a better than 95 percent success rate on initial attacks on new fire starts, the number of large fires over 100 acres grew significantly due to the extreme fire conditions. Observed fire behavior equaled fire behavior usually occurring much later in drought year fire seasons. Many fires in forested areas became fast moving crown fires with extreme resistance to control. The energy release component charts for the entire geographic area showed indices above the level thought to be the maximum possible.

On July 18, Montana Governor Judy Martz proclaimed a state of emergency due to the extremely hazardous wildfire conditions. On July 26, the Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NRMACG) was convened to set priorities and allocate or reassign firefighting resources (a diagram of NRMACG follows). As the fires grew in number, intensity and complexity, local fire management capacity was exceeded. National Incident Management Teams were mobilized to help in directing the firefighting operations. Four Area Commands and twenty-eight Type 1 and 2 Incident Management Teams were assigned by mid-August. Despite this tremendous commitment, there was still a need for additional resources to protect communities and provide for public and firefighter safety. As a result, the Governor mobilized the Montana National Guard on August 18th. On August 24th, an active Army Battalion unit was also deployed to support firefighting efforts. Due to critical shortages in key overhead positions, utilization of Australian and New Zealand fire managers was being considered at the time of this report.

Northern Rockies Geographical Area Fires
Scope of the Review as of 8/22/03

Category	8/18/03	8/19/03	8/20/03	8/21/03	8/22/03
No. of Acres		[illegible]	150,747	197,893	212,556
Total Personnel		[illegible]	8,506	9,671	10,116
Total Costs ($M)		$42.058	$49.338	$57.914	$67,279

Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating Group
Area Commands Organization
As of August 20, 2003



Best Practices

During the course of the Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight review, the Team observed several positive practices that were being implemented. Examples include:

1. **The Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating Group's (NRMACG) coordination of Wildland Fire Use and strategies other than full suppression (when contingency plans are in place) for lower-priority fires ensured that scarce resources were available for higher-threat fires.**

   In addition to the high profile fires, NRMACG was coordinating approximately 75 low-threat fires under limited action strategies at the time of the Team review. About 50 of these fires were being managed as Wildland Fire Use[1] and another 25 fires were suppression actions using a strategy other than full suppression. As a result, these fires were not competing for the scarce firefighting resources needed on other higher-priority fires that posed more immediate threats to life, property, income producing and other private lands, or other critical values.

   The Team believes this to be cost efficient when accompanied by a well-thought-out contingency plan for taking action on these fires should they move into new areas and become potentially threatening. The NRMACG had developed such a contingency plan. Area Commands had been directed to pre-identify task forces of fire fighting resources that could be immediately deployed (within 30 minutes) to new areas of concern. These task forces were not "staged" or "on standby" but continued to engage in suppression efforts on their assigned incidents. This contingency plan had yet to be tested but it appeared to be a cost effective alternative to paying for resources rather than having resources staged.

2. **Agency Administrator experiences, direction, and leadership were exemplary.**

   The Regional Forester had issued clear cost containment direction. Nearly everyone the Team talked with indicated a good understanding of the direction and reasons for cost containment. The Forest Supervisors interviewed demonstrated a good understanding of WFSA development and actively worked with the Area Commanders (AC) and Incident Commanders (IC) within their jurisdiction.

3. **There were several cost-saving techniques being employed by NRMACG, Area Commands and Incident Commands. These actions included:**
   - Creating an information center and website relieved the demand that local and media information requests placed on Agency Administrators. Considerable additional monetary costs were avoided by centralizing information and considerable social and political costs avoided by providing the public with accurate and timely information on fire activity, evacuation notices, damage assessments, and smoke alerts.
   - Combining individual fires into complexes to reduce the number of teams and fire camps that were necessary.

[1] The term "Wildland Fire Use" describes wildland fires that are managed to achieve resource objectives (i.e., hazardous fuels reduction, wildlife habitat improvement, etc.).

- Centralizing work functions, when possible, to reduce overlapping work between incidents.
- Documenting cost-saving efforts.

4. **Region 1 augmented the buying teams with local personnel to meet the acquisition needs generated by these multiple incidents.**

5. **Region 1 had assigned highly qualified Incident Business Advisors to the incidents and were very sensitive to the skills that the IBA's needed in order to best meet the business, social and political challenges.**

- Retirees were used because of their local knowledge and skills in mentoring IBA's from out of the Region.

Incident Information Package

A list of all documents reviewed by the Team is included in the references. Documents that are critical to the understanding of this report are attached.

Findings and Recommendations

Task 1 — Examine the strategic decisions made by the Incident and Area Command Teams in relationship to the local Land Management Plan, Wildland Fire Management Policy, and Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA). Ensure that the WFSA includes a least-suppression cost option. Ensure that the cost objective in the WFSA is commensurate with values to be protected.

Finding 1-1: There was a clear link between Land Management Plans (LMP), Fire Management Plans (FMP) and the WFSA's in the NRMACG.

Discussion:
The Team briefly examined the Bitterroot National Forest and Lolo National Forest Land Management Plans, approved in 1987 and 1986, respectively. As the Team has seen in previous reviews, these plans were out of date with respect to the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. However, both Forests had recently approved CY 2003 Fire Management Plans (FMP) that cross referenced the LMP and WFSA's, providing the Agency Administrator with adequate information and flexibility for developing a range of suppression alternatives. All WFSA's examined were current, included a least cost alternative, and selected alternative suppression strategies that were commensurate with the values at risk.

The Region and the two National Forests reviewed were well staffed and prepared for initial attack (IA). Fire severity funding was received to provide additional IA resources.

Recommendation 1-1: Update fire management language in the LMP so that it is consistent with the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.

Finding 1-2: The WFSA process does not fully address the analytical and decision needs of the agencies during these multi-fire episodes.

Discussion:
The current WFSA format is more appropriate for single incidents with limited complexities. As complexities evolve over the course of an incident and affect non-forest values, the WFSA program lacks the flexibility to adequately consider these values. Values such as private property, air quality, tourism, economic impacts on communities, etc. are not sufficiently addressed. For more complex incidents where the demand for resources is greater than those available, the alternatives analyzed in the WFSA process are rarely viable. In addition, during these complex, multi-fire episodes, the WFSA process becomes very cumbersome when each incident requires a separate WFSA. There may be value in creating a WFSA format that would cover several similar strategy fires over a large area.

Agency Administrators, Area Commanders, and Incident Commanders alike indicated that wildland urban interface protection priorities and suppression resource availability drove decisions and tactics. WFSA's were not always updated to reflect this reality.

The WFSA was portrayed as difficult to construct and difficult to follow. However, the WFSA has also been portrayed as an invaluable process for thinking about how to deal with an escaped fire when considering a range of alternatives, looking at what is threatened, etc. The process becomes less valuable as multiple revisions take place, becoming more of a required exercise and less of an assessment tool.

There are other centers (Area Commands, Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating Group) where decisions are made on priorities and resource allocations that affect the successful accomplishment of a desired alternative, yet these centers were not involved in drafting the WFSA's.

Recommendations 1-2:
a. Consider recommendations from the previous reviews along with this discussion to develop a WFSA process that is responsive to the needs of the Agency Administrators and the situations present at the time of WFSA development.

b. Improve the decision processes so that all resources and values are considered in the analysis and selection of an alternative. The combination of the WFSA computer program with additional decision criteria would help improve the rationale for the selected alternative.

c. Involve all decision-making partners in the formation of the WFSA and the selection of alternatives. This is especially important since the decisions will affect the strategies, tactics, and final outcome of the incident.

Finding 1-3: "Point of control" strategies resulted in a higher protection priority for structures and other cultural improvements than for natural resources.

Discussion:
Incident Commanders reported that, as applied, "point of control" strategies reduced protection of natural resources. During times when significant firefighting resource shortages exist, Incident Commanders reported that they had to abandon a strategy of perimeter control and, instead, focus limited firefighting forces on those points of the fire immediately threatening life, property, and high value resources. As a result, some sections of the fire were allowed to spread unchecked into more remote backcountry areas. This was loosely referred to as a "point-of-control" strategy.

This triage concept provides for effective use of available firefighting resources by concentrating suppression efforts on specifically defined portions of fires, where the highest values at risk are located. Point-of-control strategies appeared to reduce overall fire suppression costs; however, these strategies often result in larger acreage fires that could potentially become more costly to ultimately control if extreme weather conditions or spotting were to occur, or if suppression parameters were exceeded. Actions the Team examined appeared to be reasoned risk taking, potentially savings millions of dollars in direct suppression costs. Ironically, Incident Commanders interviewed stated that if not for suppression resource shortages, they would have employed a more aggressive and more costly perimeter control strategy consistent with the WFSA.

Point-of-control strategies appear to be cost-effective in terms of reducing overall suppression costs during times of resource shortages and should be more broadly applied when resource availability is not an issue. A secondary benefit of point of control strategies is that remote areas would now burn, adding to the mosaic of treated areas and potentially limiting the spread of future fires.

Recommendation 1-3:
Develop point-of-control strategy guidance for all fire suppression actions. Point-of-control strategies should become a regular feature of WFSA development along with least cost alternatives, augmenting the traditional direct/indirect scenarios.

Finding 1-4: Cost apportionment was inconsistent and inequitable with the values protected by firefighting efforts.

Discussion:
On many incidents, firefighting efforts focus almost exclusively on protecting communities, structures, and income producing private and state lands. Many of the assets being protected on the incidents reviewed by this team were not federally owned, yet most of the firefighting resources used to protect them were federally funded. Direction and clarification is needed for cost apportionment among federal, state and local partners for wildfires in the wildland urban interface.

Recommendation 1-4:
Develop agreements where cost apportionment more closely reflects the ownership and/or protection jurisdiction of values at risk. Cost apportionment agreements should be in place prior to the start of fire season. Guidelines for cost apportionment should be followed.

Task 2 — Examine the Delegations of Authority given to the Area Commander and Incident Commander. Ensure that cost containment direction is a part of the Delegation of Authority and that the teams are adhering to agency cost containment policy and objectives.

Finding 2-1: The NRMACG was delegated command functions for the fires in this area, resulting in fragmented accountability among Agency Administrators, Fire Commands and NRMACG.

Discussion:
Due to the complexity of the fire activity, the senior Agency Administrators (Regional Foresters, Idaho Public Lands Director, Montana State Forester, etc.) gave the NRMACG command authority to "allocate or reallocate scarce resources." This action took some options (and some degree of accountability for costs) away from local Agency Administrators. Based on regional needs, high cost portal-to-portal[2] resources and National Guard crews were ordered by NRMACG. The Agency Administrators had little option but to accept the high cost resources.

[2] Portal to portal refers to California Department of Forestry (CDF) reimbursement procedures where CDF employees receive pay from the moment they are dispatched to the time they return to their home unit. Salary costs are earned based on a 24 hour/day, seven days a week (continuous pay) schedule, regardless of their status, i.e., sleeping, eating, etc.

Without coordinated dialogue between the Geographic Multi-Agency Coordinating Group and the Agency Administrators, the selected WFSA strategy may be difficult to implement. This occurs if the required suppression resources are not received by the incident. This scenario played out in at least two of the incidents that were reviewed by the Team.

As one Agency Administrator expressed, "I should be accountable for what I have the authority to control...The NRMACG has command authority over all resources. When that happens, cost accountability should be raised to the Regional Forester. This winter, I'll be asked to justify costs resulting from decisions for which I had no influence."

Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC Groups) decisions that affect Agency Administrator decision-making should be thoroughly discussed with all affected parties prior to WFSA alternative selection. This could be accomplished by identifying a position within the MAC groups who would serve as a liaison with the affected Agency Administrators. The liaison could discuss decision rationale and provide Agency Administrators' input back to the MAC group.

Recommendation 2-1:
Examine the implications of the NRMACG Delegation of Authority referenced in this report and develop guidelines or procedures for maintaining Agency Administrator roles, responsibilities and involvement.

Task 3 — Ensure that the appropriate line officer is involved in financial oversight and strategic decisions.

Finding 3-1: Agency Administrators were actively involved ongoing financial oversight.

Discussion: Agency Administrators were involved in development and selections of WFSA alternatives. They also provided cost-containment direction in the Delegations of Authority, and assured continued financial oversight through assignment of an Incident Business Advisor.

Recommendation 3-1: No changes are recommended from the financial and Incident Business Advisor practices that the Team observed during these incidents.

Task 4 — Ensure that cost-saving actions have been implemented. The team will address costs as they relate to the WFSA, strategies, tactics, cost share agreements, contracts and purchasing.

Finding 4-1: There were numerous reports of problems with the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS). These problems resulted in resource delays, double orders, and higher costs. The Team has heard about this problem on all previous reviews.

Discussion:
ROSS is the backbone of national, regional, and local fire suppression operations. Ordering and mobilization of firefighting resources, tracking their movements, availability, and costs are managed by the ROSS system. This is the first full operational year of ROSS and therefore it is reasonable to expect some "glitches" in field trials. Neither the causes nor the solutions to the problems are clear.

This issue had surfaced so often that the Team intervened and requested that the national headquarters take action. A three person ROSS team immediately responded to our request and met with representatives of the dispatch community and buying teams for several incidents included in this review. They also visited and interviewed several incident commanders to gain a better understanding of the problems. The ROSS group had technical support teams working with the dispatch community but not with field operational centers such as the ICP's. The arrival of the ROSS group was well received and will become the basis for additional field support. Many of the problems appeared to have stemmed from a lack of training. Resolution of other problems will require establishment of additional protocols for access to ROSS data.

Recommendation 4-1:
Adopt the recommendations of the ROSS Implementation Team report. A complete copy of this report is attached.

Finding 4-2: Incident Commanders, working with the Area Command, are sharing available resources (crews, engines, IMT staff, etc.) with other incidents without always going through a formal resource ordering and release process. As a result, costs for these resources are often remaining with the Incident that originally reviewed the resources.

Discussion:
There is a continuing need in this geographic area to make the best use of available resources. Incident Commanders are encouraged to make resources available to other incidents on an as-needed basis. Incident Commands and the Area Commands still need, and want, to retain control of these resources. We can find no fault in this operational practice. This is, however, leading to costs being charged to Incidents other than where the costs were incurred. If not accurately accounted for on both the gaining and losing incidents three cost impacts will occur:

- Incident costs will not be accurately captured.
- Costs comparisons between incidents can lead to incorrect conclusions.
- Cost-share (apportionment) between agencies can be over/understated depending on the cost-share agreement.

Recommendations 4-2:
Incident financial organizations need to ensure that these costs for resources shared between units are accurately recorded.

Finding 4-3: Unit costs for fire suppression on some incidents were significantly above the average costs/acre for the fires being managed. Further analysis of the factors contributing to these costs is needed.

Discussion:
A brief analysis of incident fire suppression efforts using a cost/acres approach for fire suppression indicated that average costs-to-date for these incidents were under $400/acre. These incidents are still active and unit costs will change based on what fire activity and

management actions occur. This data analysis reflects costs at one point in time (August 22, 2003).

There are many factors that contribute to high costs. A few of these include:

- A fire in its early stages, with relatively few acres affected, and costs for initial attack that utilize air resources influencing unit costs (initial attack factors).
- High values being protected with many resources assigned and relatively few acres involved (social, political factors).
- A fire may be relatively small in nature (scale factors).
- Costs for incidents managed as a "complex" where the resources assigned are to several small incidents, but, in total, these add up to the appearance of a large fire being managed (scale factors).
- The size of Incident Management Teams and resources assigned may be more than what is needed to meet the management objectives (management factors).

Relatively lower unit costs are expected when fires grow in size and a more normalized level of costs can occur. However, this will usually be tempered by several of the factors above. As discussed in Finding 4.2, when resources are shared between incidents, the actual incident costs for any given incident may be misleading. A brief discussion with the Finance Section Chief on the Cathedral Peak fire indicated that there was "sharing" of resources with other incidents under the Area Command while these costs were being reported as part of the Cathedral Peak incident.

The incidents in this review that have the highest suppression costs/acre (as of August 22, 2003 and all above $1,400/acre) are:

1. Cathedral Peak $1,712/acre
2. Rough Draw Complex $1,662/acre
3. Dirty Ike $1,529/acre
4. Strawberry Complex $1,469/acre

Further review and analysis of factors leading to these unit costs on these incidents is needed after a short period of time to see if changes in suppression actions are warranted and if management actions are needed to address cost issues.

Recommendations 4-3:
The Agency Administrator should conduct a review and analysis of the factors leading to the high unit costs on the incidents mentioned above after allowing for one week of activity to occur. Appropriate actions would then be determined based on this review and analysis.

Task 5 — Evaluate incident costs with respect to strategic decisions, political and social issues, and use of personnel and equipment.

Finding 5-1: The use of contract crews can significantly increase suppression costs.

Discussion:

The increased utilization of contract crews has organizational implications that merit further analysis to address the potential long-term impacts on costs, and the fire qualifications of agency personnel. Fewer non-fire dedicated agency personnel are participating in emergency fire suppression activities. This has contributed to the increased use of contract resources. Downsizing actions and a move to a less field-oriented organization are also contributing to agency crew shortages. Contract crews (and other resources as well) are helping to fill organizational needs. While "contracting out" (also known as privatization) is often portrayed as more cost effective, contract crews will cost more as the demand for them increases, until market forces manifest themselves. There has been no comprehensive cost comparison to agency crews; hence it is difficult to ascertain whether contract crews are in fact more or less cost effective than agency crews.

Recommendation 5-1:
Conduct a comprehensive cost analysis of contract crews, ensuring comparability (cost to government, training costs, mobilization, workers compensation and unemployment benefits, and availability are a few of the factors to consider). Conduct an assessment of the contracting impact on the agency organization. Issues such as agency employee development, length of time necessary to obtain fire experience qualifications, and future development of incident management teams should be considered.

Task 6 – Examine the Overall Management of Large Fires[3]

The Team has learned of additional issues that do not clearly fit under the five tasks contained in the Team's Delegation of Authority. These matters are also relevant to large fire management and may have organizational implications that require additional attention.

6.1 Administrative, Contract, or Financial Business Practices

Finding 6-1: There were some administrative, contract and financial practice issues that are relevant to business management on these and other large fires.

Discussion:

6-1a. Finance Cost Containment- In the absence of specific direction, various strategies for capturing cost containment activities were developed and implemented on these incidents. The Team provided guidance during visits with Incident Finance Chiefs, Incident Business Advisors and Buying Teams. At several of the incidents a table format was being used (see examples).

Recommendation 6-1a:
Develop specific advice on how to document cost containment decisions and where these documents should be maintained. All functional areas of the incident should be responsible for compiling the information and submitting it to a central point in the incident finance section. Whatever instrument is used for capturing cost containment, brevity and content should be emphasized.

[3] Reference the Forest Service Manual 5194 for a complete discussion of large fire review topics.

6-1b. Obligations, Accrual Accounting and Financial Management- Availability of financial and accounting technical experts on the incidents was limited. They remained on the home units responding to audit requests, financial management "cookbooks" and accrual accounting. Individuals with such skills would be valuable additions to the impacted unit or the incident finance section for capturing costs and obligations. The Region has provided solid direction to the incidents, ensuring the timely transfer of accounting information to the Forests for input into the financial system. During the first 72 hours of the incident, the finance staff at the home unit was utilizing spreadsheets to capture cost information. This information was provided by dispatch. There are significant numbers of emergency equipment rental agreements where accruals are being recorded. The Region was also capturing accrual accounting data for the contract resources assigned to the incident. Accrual data input is a business practice that is required for the agency to achieve a clean audit opinion from the Office of Inspector General.

Recommendation 6-1b:

- Develop criteria for capturing costs for initial attack, extended attack, and large fires.
- Develop a short and long- term strategy to address the staffing and skills needed for financial support of incidents.
- Guidance should be developed for capturing costs of initial attack, extended attack and project incidents.

6-1c. Acquisition- The number of buying teams is declining nationwide. There are only 10 buying teams listed for assignment within the system. Buying teams are being mobilized on a more frequent basis. As a result, more home units are being left without enough qualified personnel to complete the necessary acquisition/contracting work.

Recommendation 6-1c:

Initiate actions to increase the availability of contract warranted employees from agencies outside the natural resource community (i.e., the military is used to support line and aviation activities). Training relevant to the specifics of fire/incident management should be provided.

6-1d. Cost Share Agreements- The state, county and local sub-tiered cost-share agreements that are supposed to capture the actual apportionment of costs for individual incidents were not prepared until days or sometimes even weeks after the start of the incident. These sub-tiered agreements are normally tied to a master or umbrella agreement with these state, county and local entities. The Team found that the necessary master/umbrella agreements were in place.

Recommendation 6-1d:

Assign a "Grants and Agreement Specialist" to the Area Commands to assist, consult, develop and administer the cost-share agreements. Best practices for cost share agreements should be posted on the National Advanced Resource Training Center website.

6-1e. Incident Business Advisors (IBA's)- There is a national shortage of qualified IBA's. Region 1 placed emphasis on training to increase the number of qualified IBA's. Additional

on-the-ground experience is needed for IBA's so that they may become familiar with large incidents.

Recommendation 6-1e:
The Agencies should increase the pool of well-trained and qualified IBA's. A structured follow-up shadow/mentoring program would help in developing good IBA's.

6-1f. Contract Oversight- Large quantities of contract resources were deployed in this Region. At the same time, there was a shortage of contract oversight and administration on these incidents. As federal agencies become more reliant on contract services there is a corresponding need to increase contract oversight and compliance. Otherwise, there will be increased vulnerability to waste, fraud, and abuse. There are also health and safety implications. An example of insufficient oversight is Type II contract crews arriving on at least one of these incidents with less than the required number of English speaking members.

Recommendation 6-1f:
Develop a national guideline that specifies the appropriate amount of contract administration and technical oversight assigned to an incident. This would assist Incident Management Teams in the interpretation of contracts and allow for more timely resolution of performance issues. A comprehensive training program should be developed for those responsible in contract administration and oversight positions.

6.2 Fire Management

Finding 6-2a: The Area Commands under this review, operating under the NRMACG, served a dual capacity, filling both the Area Command function and the Zone Multi-Agency Coordinating (Zone MAC) function.

Discussion:
The role of the AC within the geographic area had expanded beyond what is normally expected of an Area Command. The reasons for this were not clear, nor were the implications for Agency Administrator-fire management interactions. The Area Command performed both the established functions of managing critical resources and assisting the Incident Management Teams, as well as the roles normally performed by Zone MAC groups. While the consolidation of some services (joint information centers, geographic information system applications and temporary flight restrictions coordination, incident meteorologist, WFSA Support Teams, etc.), under these Area Commands has the potential to reduce some incident costs, the loss of local control may have drawbacks. The Team did not see where the cost for these expanded Area Commands was being captured or reported on daily situation summaries.

Recommendation 6.2a:
Determine the desired structure and roles of MAC and Area Command and revise training programs to implement the desired structure.

Finding 6-2b: The management and length of assignments for Area Commands and Type 1 Incident Management Teams needs further refinement to improve management consistency and best practices.

Discussion:
At this point in the fire season, several Area Commands and Incident Management Teams have been involved in a wide variety of fire and non-fire assignments for extended periods of time. Length of assignments for Area Commands and Type 1 Teams has been a topic of discussion throughout the current fire season. Most individuals interviewed by this Team felt that 21 day assignments are preferred for management consistency, improved community relations, fatigue management, firefighter safety, improved cost accountability and reduced transition costs.

Recommendation 6-2b:
The agencies should consider establishing "standing" teams that could be deployed throughout the year for non-fire emergencies (Shuttle Recovery, FEMA Assignments, Newcastle Disease, Gypsy Moth, Avian Influenza, Mad Cow Disease, and Homeland Security). This would help "screen" the organized fire suppression IMT's from these non-typical assignments, allowing them to focus on their normal job duties, and be readily available for fire suppression assignments. One Area Command team and three Type 1 Incident Management Teams (mini-National Incident Management Organization) should be capable of accomplishing these non-fire tasks. They could also support the non-wildfire agencies in training missions. All Area Commands and Type 1 IMT's should be available for 21-day assignments. Area Command teams should also be available for increased assignment lengths, when appropriate.

Finding 6-2c: Substantial investments were being made in the form of fire suppression and area treatments, but the investments and treatments were not always being capitalized upon.

Discussion:
Large fires were occurring throughout the area. As a result, some of the natural fuel regimes were being brought into better balance. Maintenance of these areas would help keep the landscape from reverting back to the very condition that contributed to fires becoming large in the first place. The burned areas linking these wildland fires could be treated, thus maintaining some age class diversity in the area. Communities that have been threatened by these wildfires have had their risk factor reduced. As a result, only minimal maintenance work would be needed. New funding could be applied to areas where community risk remains high and where large devastating fires are likely to occur.

Recommendation 6-2c:
Establish a national strategic approach to the allocation of funds for maintenance of areas affected by large-scale wildland fire episodes. To take advantage of costs already expended, (i.e., suppression costs), some level of priority should be given for areas that have been brought back into a more natural fire regime condition class.

General Conclusions

Circumstances (multiple fires, extreme fire weather and limited availability of fire suppression resources) are dictating the strategies and tactics being employed on these incidents. No major cost-related issues were identified on the incident(s) this Team reviewed, in part because of the limited availability of fire suppression resources. The protection of non-federal lands, i.e. private property was taking precedence in priority.

The availability of administrative fire support personnel has been limited by the demands of their normal job duties. Such duties include fulfilling end of fiscal year audit and accounting requirements. The lack of experienced administrative support personnel on fires is creating problems in incident business administration.

There is an increased awareness of costs at all levels within the Northern Rockies Geographic Area. Documentation requirements are being met at all levels. Justifications and analysis are being completed for expenditures, where appropriate. All Delegations of Authority reviewed by this Team included cost containment direction.

Area Command adds a new dimension for cost containment as the Commander has the ability to consolidate services in their entire area for Incident Meteorologist, Long Term Analyst, temporary flight restrictions, geographic information systems, and aircraft services. This helps reduce individual incident costs and provides consistency among the incidents.

Delegating command authority to NRMACG may have fragmented the authority of the involved Agency Administrators by reducing their decision space in managing costs. NRMACG command authority also impacted the three Area Commands, who by delegation were working for the local Agency Administrators.

As with the previous reviews, ROSS and the WFSA process continued to receive criticism. Both systems need further refinement to better meet agency needs

Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Team
Northern Rockies Geographic Area Command Fires

Steve Ellis, Team Leader
BLM Lakeview District Manager, Lakeview, OR

Harry Croft, Incident Business Specialist
Deputy National Fire Plan Coordinator, USFS, Washington, D.C.

Rich Wands, Incident Management Specialist
Director, USFS National Advanced Resource Technology Center, Marana, AZ

Steve Pedigo, Incident Management Specialist
President, Safe Fire Program, Conifer, CO

Mark Beighley, Fire Behavior Analyst
Fuels Program Specialist, USFS, Washington, D.C.

John De La Torre, Incident Finance Specialist
Budget Director, USFS Region 5, Vallejo, CA

Dede Domingos, Incident Business Specialist
Interagency Administrative Officer, Lakeview BLM District/Fremont-Winema NFs, Lakeview, OR

Khon Viengkham, Financial Management Trainee
Budget Analyst, USFS, Washington, D.C.

Melissa Simons, Writer/Editor
Public Affairs Specialist, USFS, Washington, D.C.

List of Personnel Interviewed, Northern Rockies Geographic Area Fires

Name	Title
Bill Adams	Planning Section Chief, NRMACG
Geoff Babb	Planning Section Chief 2 - Bole's Meadow Fire
Ann Bastion	Finance Section Chief - Gold 1 Fire
Tom Beddow	Area Command Aviations Coordinator, 93 West Area Command
Pete Blume	Incident Commander - Winslow Fire
Bill Breedlove	Fire Management Officer - Central Area Command
Tom Boatner	NRMACG, Bureau of Land Management Contact
Debbie Boggess	Lolo National Forest, Budget and Finance
David Bull	Forest Supervisor, Bitterroot National Forest
Mike Campbell	Area Command Aviations Coordinator - Central Area Command
Elaine Courtright	Finance Section Chief - Black Mountain 2 Fire
Pat Dearing	Buying Team Leader – 93 East and 93 West Area Commands
Kenny DeBerg	Supply Unit Leader - Beaver Lakes Complex
Nancy DeLong	ROSS Assistant Project Leader and Implementation Team Leader
Len Dems	NRMACG, National Park Service Contact
Loni Dunnigan	Time Unit Leader - Black Mountain 2 Fire
Steve Frye	Incident Commander - Beaver Lakes Complex
Dale Gardner	Incident Commander - East Incident Fire
Gary Garthwat	Lolo National Forest, Program Officer
Rock Gerke	Liaison Officer - Bole's Meadow Fire
Greg Greenhoe	Area Commander - 93 West Area Command
Jim Greene	NRMACG, Montana Disaster and Emergency Services Contact
Tom Hamilton	Assistant Area Commander for Logistics - Central Montana Area Command
Chris Hoff	Incident Commander - Bole's Meadow Fire
Steve Holder	Area Command Logistics - 93 West Area Command
Kay Houk	Finance Section Chief 2 - Bole's Meadow Fire
Jim Kelton	NRMACG, Fish and Wildlife Service Contact
Louis Kearney	Incident Commander - Winslow Fire
Jim Krugman	Area Commander DR Trainee - 93 East Area Command
Jessica Loconte	Lolo National Forest, Accountant Trainee
Rich Lasko	NRMACG, Fire Use
Bob Meuchels	Assistant Area Commander for Plans - Central Montana Area Command
Joe Norrell	Acting Financial Officer, Lolo National Forest
Tim Murphy	Vice Chair, NRMACG, Montana DNRC Contact
Tracey Nimlos	Coordinator, NRMACG
John Philbin	Incident Commander - Gold 1 Fire

Rochelle Piro	ROSS Requirements Analyst (Lockheed Martin)
Paula Plymale	Incident Business Advisor Central Montana Area Command/Gallatin NF
Frank Preite	Administrative Officer - Gallatin National Forest
Judy Reddin	Buying Team Leader
Joe Ribar	Area Commander - 93 East Area Command
Rodd Richardson	NRMACG, Forest Service Contact
John Roberts	Acting Plans Chief - Central Montana Area Command
Jim Roessler	NRMACG, Bureau of Indian Affairs-Range Management Contact
Mark Rounsaville	Area Commander - Central Montana Area Command
Wayne Rowe	Resource Status Unit Leader - Bole's Meadow Fire
Carol Salo	Incident Business Advisor, Lolo National Forest
Jack Sater	Incident Business Advisor, Lolo National Forest
Tony Sciaca	Operations Chief - Gold 1 Fire
Jeff Scussels	Planning Section Chief - Beaver Lakes Complex
Kathy Shelton	Incident Business Advisor, Bitterroot National Forest
Brian Shiplett	Chair, NRMACG, Idaho Department of Lands Contact
John Specht	NRMACG, Northern Rockies Coordination Group-OPS
Kevin Sullivan	Supply Unit Leader - Beaver Lakes Complex
Bill Sweet	Information Officer - Central Montana Area Command
Mary Ann Szymoniak	ROSS Incident Automation Team
Kathy Vensel	Finance Section Chief, Cathedral Peak Fire
Roberta Whitlock	Incident Administration Coordinator, R-1/R-O
Andrea Wojtasek	Information Officer - Central Montana Area Command
Will Wood	Financial Liason for Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation - Bole's Meadow Fire
Judy Ziemer	Cost Unit Leader - Black Mountain Fire

References

USDA-Forest Service. 2003. USDA Forest Service Fire and Aviation Operations Plan.

USDI. 2003. Fire and Aviation Operations Action Plan. Washington, D.C.

USDA-Forest Service. 2003. Forest Service Manual 5194.14 (September 13, 2003).

Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Review Team. 2003. Record File Listing:

- Incident Management Situation Reports (August 19-August 24, 2003)
- Land Management Plans (Bitterroot National Forest, Lolo National Forest)
- Fire Management Plans (Bitterroot National Forest, Lolo National Forest)

Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NRMAC)

- Northern Rockies Geographic Area Multi-Agency Coordinating Group, Daily Action Plan, August 19, 2003
- Northern Rockies MAC Group, Strategic Approaches to Large Incident Management
- Northern Rockies MAC Group, Priorities, August 19, 2003 – August 20, 2003
- Northern Rockies, GACC Large Incident Report, 8/12/2003

93 East Area Command

- 93 East Area Command, Demobilization Plan
- 93 East Area Command, Delegation of Authority (Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Bitterroot National Forest, Lolo National Forest, Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Bureau of Land Management)
- 93 East Area Command, Delegations of Authority (Gold 1 Fire, Boles Meadow Fire)
- 93 East Area Command Incidents, WFSA (All)
- 93 East Area Command Incidents, 209's (All)
- Gold 1 Fire, Delegation of Authority (Stevensville Ranger District)
- Gold 1 Fire, ICARS
- Gold 1 Fire, Cost Containment Measures
- Boles Meadow Fire, Delegation of Authority (Lolo National Forest)
- Boles Meadow Fire, ICARS
- Boles Meadow Fire, Cost Containment Summary
- Boles Meadow Fire, Cost Share Agreement
- Mineral Primm Fire, ICARS
- Cooney Ridge Fire, ICARS

93 West Area Command

- 93 West Area Command, Delegation of Authority (Idaho Department of Lands)
- 93 West Area Command, Delegation of Authority (Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Bitterroot National Forest, Lolo National Forest,

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Bureau of Land Management)

- 93 West Area Command, Incident Cost Management Spreadsheet
- 93 West Area Command Incidents, Delegations of Authority (Black Mountain Incident, Cherry Creek Incident, Fish Creek Complex, North Fork Howard Incident, Slims/Poet Complex, Split Rock Incident, Beaver Lake Complex)
- 93 West Area Command Incidents, WFSA (all)
- 93 West Area Command Incidents, 209's (all)
- Fish Creek Complex, Delegation of Authority (Ninemile District Ranger, Lolo National Forest)
- Fish Creek Complex, Certification of WFSA (Plains/Thompson Falls, Lolo National Forest)
- Black Mountain Incident, Delegation of Authority (Montana DNRC, Lolo National Forest)
- Black Mountain Incident, WFSA
- Black Mountain Incident, ICARS Reports
- North Fork Howard Incident, WFSA
- Clearwater National Forest, Operating Guidelines, Incident Business Administration

Central Montana Area Command

- Central Montana Area Command, Delegation of Authority (Custer National Forest, Helena National Forest, Gallatin National Forest, Beaverhead/Deerlodge National Forest, Lewis and Clark National Forest, Caribou-Traghee National Forest, Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Yellowstone National Park, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Bureau of Land Management)
- Central Montana Area Command, Daily Action Plan (August 24, 2003)
- Central Montana Area Command Incidents, Delegations of Authority (Burnt Ridge/Sheep Camp Complex, Cathedral Peak Complex, East Complex, Lincoln Complex, Rough Draw Fire Complex, Winslow Incident)
- Central Montana Area Command, 209's (all)

Attachments

List of Acronyms

Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Oversight Review Team Delegation of Authority, Northern Rockies Geographic Area Fires

Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating Group, Delegations of Authority (Regional Forester, Idaho Department of Lands, Bureau of Land Management, North Dakota Forest Service, National Park Service, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, National Wildlife Refuge System, Bureau of Indian Affairs)

Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating Group, Area Commands Map, August 16, 2003

Northern Rockies Geographical Area Fires Total Incident Cost Trends, August 18 – August 22, 2003

Northern Rockies Fires through August 22, 2003

Suppression Cost/Acre Charts for Incidents Assigned to the Area Commands

Resource Ordering Status System Report, August 2003

Example Cost Containment Summary: Bole's Meadow Fire, Central Oregon Incident Management Team

Example Cost Containment List, "Large Fire Cost Tickler List"

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENTS

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Name
AC	Area Commander
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
FMP	Fire Management Plan
MAC	Multi-Agency Coordinating Group
IBA	Incident Business Advisor
IC	Incident Commander
ICP	Incident Command Post
IMT	Incident Management Team
LMP	Land Management Plan
NRMACG	Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating Group
PL	Preparedness Level
ROSS	Resource Ordering and Status System
USDA FS	United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service
WFSA	Wildland Fire Situation Analysis
WFU	Wildland Fire Use

United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Washington Office | 14th & Independence SW P.O. Box 96090 Washington, DC 20090-6090

File Code: 5190/1230 Date: AUG 21 2003
Route To:

Subject: Delegation of Authority

To: Steve Ellis, Team Leader, Large Incident Strategic Decision and Assessment Team

Thank you for agreeing to take this assignment. This delegation of authority requests that you review the management of incidents within the area commands of Greg Greenhoe, Joe Ribar, and Marc Rounsaville and report your findings to the Regional Forester and me. As you review decisions and processes on the individual incidents you investigate, include the relationship of area command to the incident management team. Please try and minimize your impact on the incident management teams, area commands, and local personnel. Coordinate your entry conference with the area commanders and local agency administrators.

The purposes of your review team are to:

1. Examine the strategic decisions made by the incident and area command teams in relationship to the local Land Management Plan, Wildland Fire Management Policy, and Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA). Ensure that the WFSA includes a least-suppression cost option. Ensure that the cost objective in the WFSA is commensurate with values to be protected.

2. Examine the delegation of authority given to the Area Commander and Incident Commander. Ensure that cost containment direction is a part of the delegation of authority and that the teams are adhering to agency cost containment policy and objectives.

3. Ensure that the appropriate line officer is involved in financial oversight and strategic decisions.

4. Ensure that cost-saving actions have been implemented. The team will address costs as they relate to the WFSA, strategies, tactics, cost share agreements, contracts, and purchasing.

5. Evaluate the incident costs with respect to strategic decisions, political and social issues, and use of personnel and equipment.

Use the Large Fire Cost Reduction Action Plan (March 2003), the USDA Forest Service Fire and Aviation Operations Plan (April 2003), and the draft of the Assessment Team Report Format as your guiding documents.

If the team finds serious cost-related problems, the Team Leader will notify and advise the Regional Forester and me of necessary immediate corrective actions.

Again, thank you for your willingness to assume this responsibility and make this contribution to the firefighting effort. Cost containment is a critical issue. We all must look at innovative ways to address this issue, while at the same time, keeping safety as our first priority.

for JOEL D. HOLTROP
Deputy Chief State and Private Forestry

cc: Bradley Powell

United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Region One | 200 East Broadway, P.O. Box 7669, Missoula, MT 59807

File Code: 5100 **Date:** August 13, 2003
Route To:

Subject: Expanded Delegation of Authority

To: Rodd Richardson, Director – Fire Aviation and Air

The purpose of this memo is to authorize you, or your designated acting, to establish priorities for wildland fire management incidents and implement decisions for allocation of wildland fire management resources as part of the Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) group. This expanded delegation is in accordance with the Northern Rockies Fire Management strategic Plan, as described on page 10, MAC Roles and Responsibilities. At our current level of activity, this delegation provides you the authority to allocate or reallocate scarce resources between Area Commands and Incident Management Teams and Northern Rockies zones. Procedures for allocating and reallocating wildland fire management resources are contained in the National and Northern Rockies Interagency Mobilization Guides.

As my representative you, or your designated acting, are responsible for ensuring that agency policies and procedures are maintained, agency administrators are informed of actions, and operational decisions are implemented. If you have questions regarding this delegation, please contact me.

Kathleen A. McAllister

/s/ BRADLEY E.POWELL
Regional Forester

Printed on Recycled Paper

File Code: **Date:** August 13, 2003

Subject: Expanded Delegation of Authority

To: **Brian Shiplett, Idaho Department of Lands**

The purpose of this memo is to authorize you, or your designated acting, to establish priorities for wildland fire management incidents and implement decisions for allocation of wildland fire management resources as part of the Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) group. This expanded delegation is in accordance with the Northern Rockies Fire Management strategic Plan, as described on page 10, MAC Roles and Responsibilities. At our current level of activity, this delegation provides you the authority to allocate or reallocate scarce resources between Area Commands and Incident Management Teams and Northern Rockies zones. Procedures for allocating and reallocating wildland fire management resources are contained in the National and Northern Rockies Interagency Mobilization Guides.

As my representative you, or your designated acting, are responsible for ensuring that agency policies and procedures are maintained, agency administrators are informed of actions, and operational decisions are implemented. If you have questions regarding this delegation, please contact me.

Winston A Wiggins

WINSTON A WIGGINS
DIRECTOR
IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Montana State Office
5001 Southgate Drive, P.O. Box 36800
Billings, Montana 59107-6800
http://www.mt.blm.gov/

In Reply To:

9210 (920)

August 12, 2003

Memorandum

To: State Fire Management Officer

From: State Director

Subject: Expanded Delegation of Authority – Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) Group

The purpose of this memorandum is to authorize members of the Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating Group to represent the Northern Rockies Agency Administrators as a functioning member of the Northern Rockies MAC Group, and to authorize the agency representatives to establish priorities for wildland fire management incidents, and implement decisions for allocation of wildland fire management resources as part of the Northern Rockies MAC Group.

The purpose of the Northern Rockies MAC Group is to provide an interagency approach to wildland fire management by:

- Providing leadership and coordinated direction to wildland fire management programs
- Providing a forum for exchange of ideas and development of consistent policies
- Fostering cooperation, avoiding wasteful duplication, and facilitating maximum efficiency in wildland fire management programs through coordinated planning and utilization of closest forces and shared resources concepts
- Establishing and maintaining an interagency approach to wildland fire management programs by developing full interagency association, and facilitation of a high degree of professionalism, trust, and mutual assistance among wildland fire management agencies, identifying issues, establishing priorities, developing alternatives, and recommending a unified course of action to Northern Rockies Agency Administrators
- Allocate critical resources and re-assign resources between Area Commands, Incident Management Teams and zones as deemed necessary by the Northern Rockies MAC

As agency representatives to these groups, these individuals will ensure that agency policies and procedures are maintained, agency administrators are informed of actions, and operational decisions of the groups are implemented.

Decisions of the MAC Group include prioritization of wildland fire incidents and allocation or re-allocation of wildland fire resources to meet wildland fire management priorities. Procedures for allocating and re-allocating wildland fire management resources are contained in the National and Northern Rockies Interagency Mobilization Guides.

The designated individuals are authorized to implement the decisions of the Northern Rockies MAC Group as they affect units within the Northern Rockies.

Tom Boatner	Bureau of Land Management
Jim Greene	Montana Disaster and Emergency Services
Jim Kelton	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Tom Maloney	Montana Fire Chief's Association
Tim Murphy	Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Rodd Richardson	USDA Forest Service
Jim Roessler	Bureau of Indian Affairs, Rocky Mountain Region
Mike Santucci	North Dakota Forest Service
Brian Shiplett	Idaho Department of Lands
Bryan Swift	National Park Service
Brett Waters	MT Fire Wardens Association
Cory Winnie	Bureau of Indian Affairs, Pacific Northwest Region
Mike McMeekin	Missoula County Sheriff

Diane M. Friez

Diane M. Friez
Acting

NORTH DAKOTA FOREST SERVICE

"To care for, protect and improve forest and natural resources to enhance the quality of life for present and future generations."

MEMORANDUM

TO: **Michael Santucci, Fire Management Coordinator**
North Dakota Forest Service

FROM: **Larry A. Kotchman, State Forester** Larry

SUBJECT: **Expanded Delegation of Authority**

DATE: **August 13, 2003**

The purpose of this memo is to authorize you, or your designated acting, to establish priorities for wildland fire management incidents and implement decisions for allocation of wildland fire management resources as part of the Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) group. This expanded delegation is in accordance with the Northern Rockies Fire Management strategic Plan, as described on page 10, MAC Roles and Responsibilities. At our current level of activity, this delegation provides you the authority to allocate or reallocate scarce resources between Area Commands and Incident Management Teams and Northern Rockies zones. Procedures for allocating and reallocating wildland fire management resources are contained in the National and Northern Rockies Interagency Mobilization Guides.

As my representative, you, or your designated acting, are responsible for ensuring that agency policies and procedures are maintained, agency administrators are informed of actions, and operational decisions are implemented. If you have questions regarding this delegation, please contact me.

State Forester Molberg Forestry Center 307 First Street East Bottineau, ND 58318-1100
Tel: (701) 228-5422 • Fax: (701) 228-5448 • E-mail: forest@state.nd.us • www.state.nd.us/forest

United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
INTERMOUNTAIN REGION
12795 West Alameda Parkway
Post Office Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

REPLY REFER TO:

Y14 (IMR-FMO)

AUG 14 2003

Memorandum

To: Fire Management Officer, Intermountain Region, Bryan Swift
Deputy Fire Management Officer, Intermountain Region, Len Dems

From: Director, Intermountain Region

Subject: Expanded Delegation of Authority

The purpose of this memo is to authorize you, or your designated acting, to establish priorities for wildland fire management incidents and implement decisions for allocation of wildland fire management resources as part of the Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) group. This expanded delegation is in accordance with the Northern Rockies Fire Management strategic Plan, as described on page 10, MAC Roles and Responsibilities. At our current level of activity, this delegation provides you the authority to allocate or reallocate scarce resources between Area Commands and Incident Management Teams and Northern Rockies zones. Procedures for allocating and reallocating wildland fire management resources are contained in the National and Northern Rockies Interagency Mobilization Guides.

As my representative you, or your designated acting, are responsible for ensuring that agency policies and procedures are maintained, agency administrators are informed of actions, and operational decisions are implemented. If you have questions regarding this delegation, please contact Hal Grovert at 303-969-2800.

Karen P. Wade

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
AND CONSERVATION
2705 Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT 59804-3199
(406) 542-4300 Telefax (406) 542-4217

JUDY MARTZ
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MONTANA

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE (406) 444-2074
TELEFAX: (406) 444-2684

To: Tim Murphy, Chief, DNRC Fire and Aviation Management Bureau
From: Bob Harrington, Montana State Forester
Date: August 15, 2003
Subject: Delegation of Authority

The purpose of this memo is to authorize you, or your designated acting, to establish priorities for wildland fire management incidents and implement decisions for allocation of wildland fire management resources as part of the Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) group. This expanded delegation is in accordance with the Northern Rockies Fire Management strategic Plan, as described on page 10, MAC Roles and Responsibilities. At our current level of activity, this delegation provides you the authority to allocate or reallocate scarce resources between Area Commands and Incident Management Teams and Northern Rockies zones. Procedures for allocating and reallocating wildland fire management resources are contained in the National and Northern Rockies Interagency Mobilization Guides.

As my representative you, or your designated acting, are responsible for ensuring that agency policies and procedures are maintained, agency administrators are informed of actions, and operational decisions are implemented. If you have questions regarding this delegation, please contact me.

NWRS/Operations
HB6
MAIL STOP 60139

To: Assistant Regional Directors, Mountain-Prairie Region

From: Regional Director, Mountain-Prairie Region

Subject: Expanded Delegation of Authority – Northern Rockies Multi-agency coordinating (MAC) Group

The purpose of this memorandum is to authorize you, or your designated acting, to establish priorities for wildland fire management incidents and implement decisions for allocation of wildland fire management resources as part of the Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordinating (MAC) group. This expanded delegation is in accordance with the Northern Rockies Fire Management strategic Plan, as described on page 10, MAC Roles and Responsibilities. At our current level of activity, this delegation provides you the authority to allocate or reallocate scarce resources between Area Commands and Incident Management Teams and Northern Rockies zones. Procedures for allocating and reallocating wildland fire management resources are contained in the National and Northern Rockies Interagency Mobilization Guides.

As my representative, you or your designated acting, are responsible for ensuring that agency policies and procedures are maintained, agency administrators are informed of actions, and operational decisions are implemented. If you have questions regarding this delegation, please contact me.

cc: Roger Spaulding, Acting SFMC

bcc: Rick Coleman, Regional Chief, NWRS
Phil Street
Jim Kelton
RO rf, RD rf
rwrf, rwfiles

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
Northwest Regional Office
911 N.E. 11th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97232-4169

IN REPLY REFER TO:

AUG 13 2003

MEMORANDUM

To: Cory Winnie, Northwest Regional Protection Forester

From: ACTING Northwest Regional Director

Subject: Delegation of Authority to Represent the Northwest Regional Office

You are delegated to act for me as my representative on the Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordination (NR MAC) Group. In that capacity, you are authorized to represent the agency's interests in MAC Group deliberations to:

1. Establish interagency pre-suppression strategies for the Northern Rockies in anticipation of incident demands.

2. Set priorities and plans for allocation, re-allocation, and demobilization of fire suppression resources.

3. Develop actions to respond to national MAC direction.

4. Communicate as necessary with other agency representatives and/or external parties (e.g., interested decision-makers, media, etc.).

This delegation shall become effective the date of this document and shall continue until the MAC Group completes its work and disbands, or until relieved of your assignment, whichever comes first.

I ask that you brief me or my Deputy Regional Director daily on the current fire situation at (503) 231-6702.

Jerome D. Dafour

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
Northwest Regional Office
911 N.E. 11th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97232-4169

AUG 13 2013

MEMORANDUM

To: Deputy Director, Northwest Regional Protection Forester

From: Northwest Regional Director

Subject: Delegation of Authority to Represent the Northwest Regional Office

Please be advised that you are hereby delegated to act for me as my representative on the Northern Rockies Multi-Agency Coordination (NR MAC) Group. In this capacity, you are authorized to represent the agency's interests in MAC Group deliberations to:

1. Establish interagency pre-season strategies for the Northern Rockies in anticipation of incident season.

2. Set priorities and plans for allocation, reallocation, and demobilization of fire suppression resources.

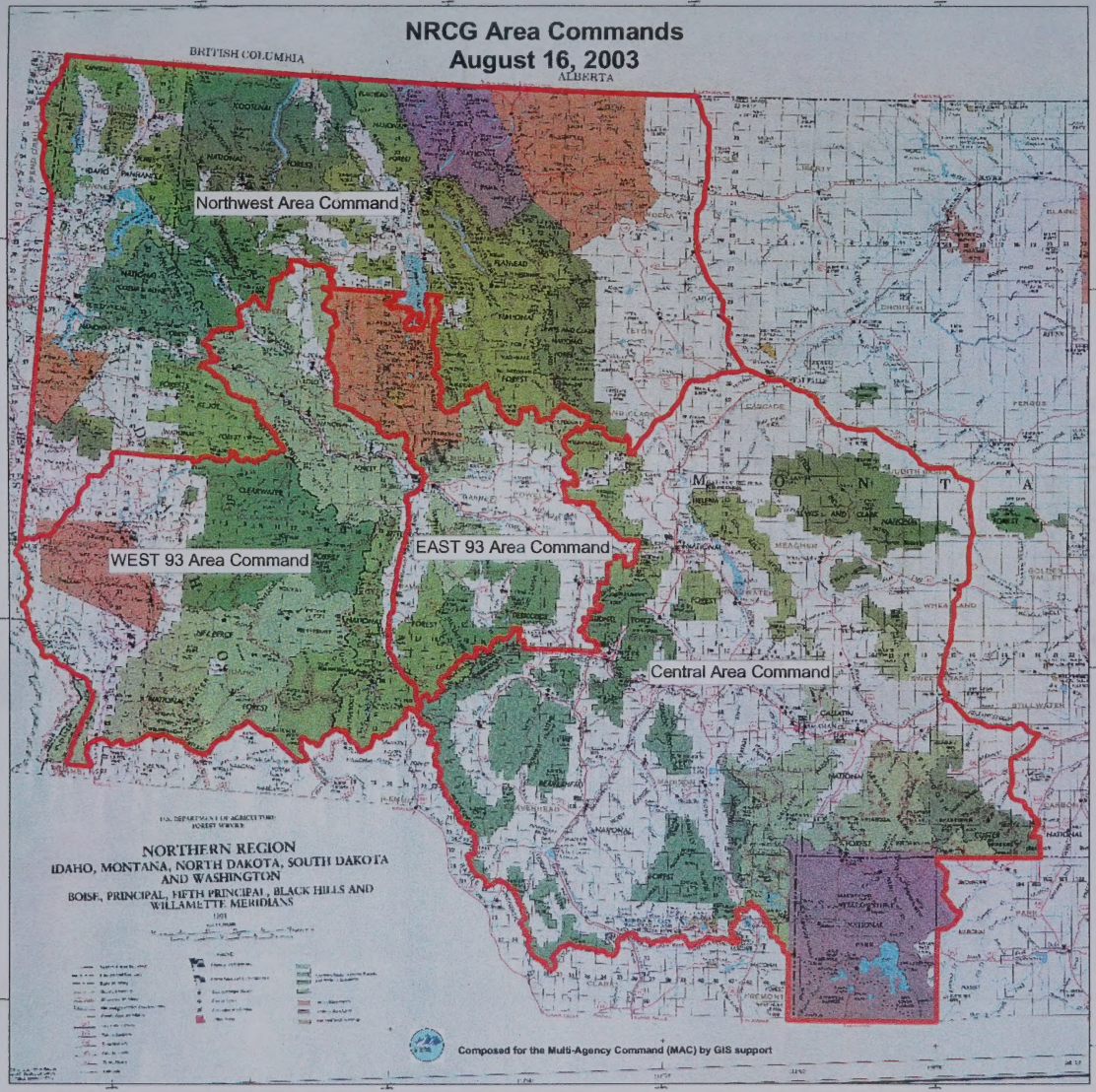
3. Develop actions to respond to national MAC direction.

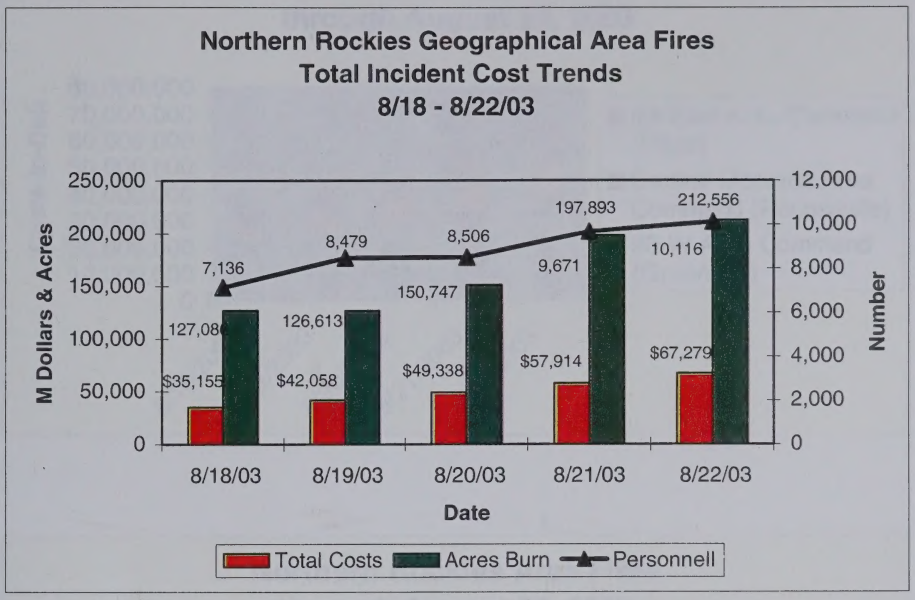
4. Communicate as necessary with other agency representatives and/or external parties (e.g., Incident Management Teams, media, etc.).

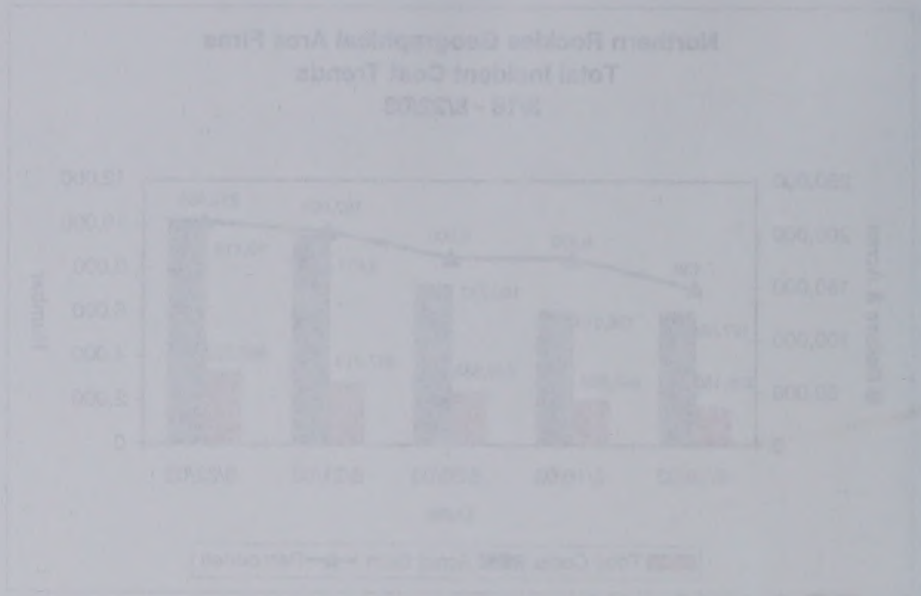
This delegation shall become effective on date of this document and shall continue until the MAC Group completes its work and disbands, or until relieved of your assignment, whichever occurs first.

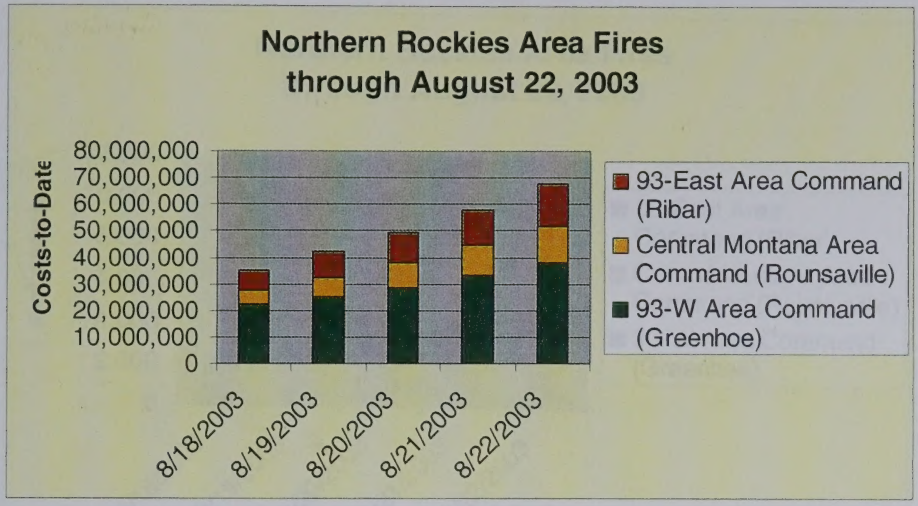
I ask that you hold me or my Deputy Regional Director duly on the current fire season in (201) 231-6202.

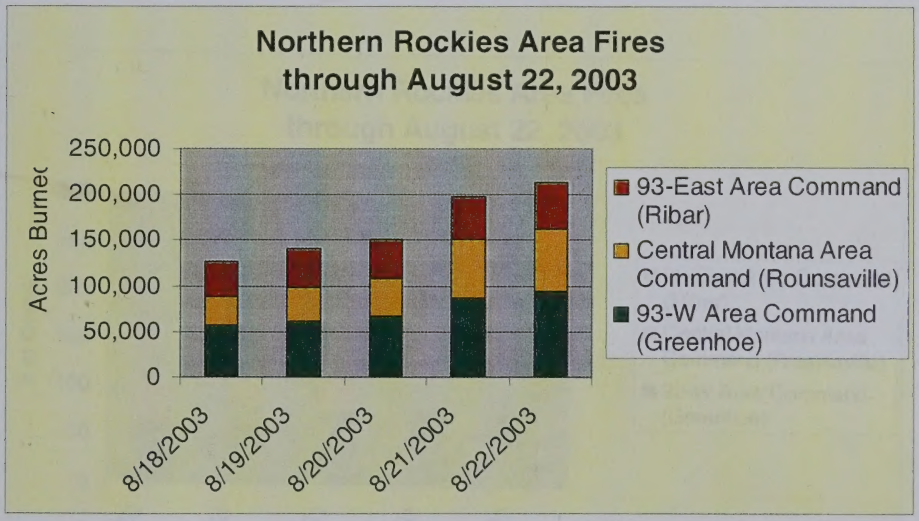
Sincerely,

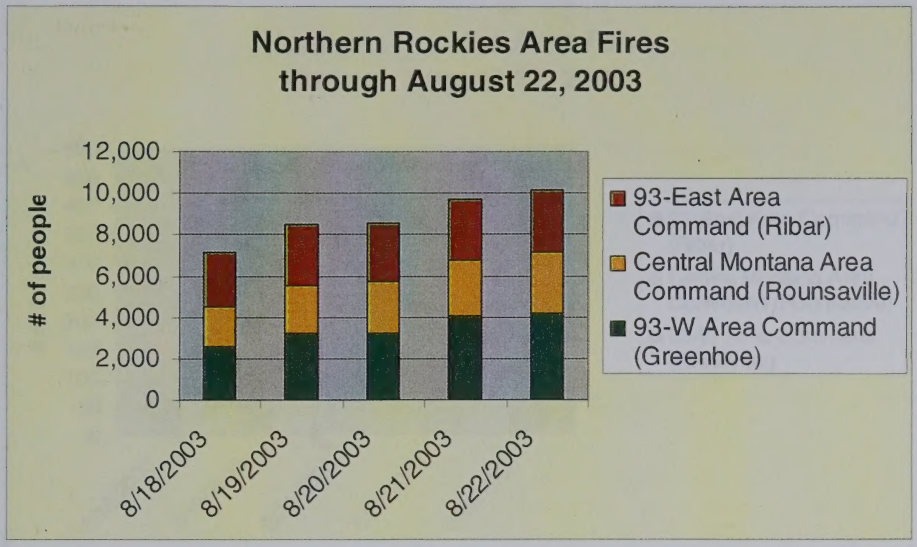

NRCG Area Commands
August 16, 2003
BRITISH COLUMBIA
ALBERTA
Northwest Area Command
WEST 93 Area Command
EAST 93 Area Command
Central Area Command
NORTHERN REGION
IDAHO, MONTANA, NORTH DAKOTA, SOUTH DAKOTA
AND WASHINGTON
BOISE, PRINCIPAL, FIFTH PRINCIPAL, BLACK HILLS AND
WILLAMETTE MERIDIANS
Composed for the Multi-Agency Command (MAC) by GIS support

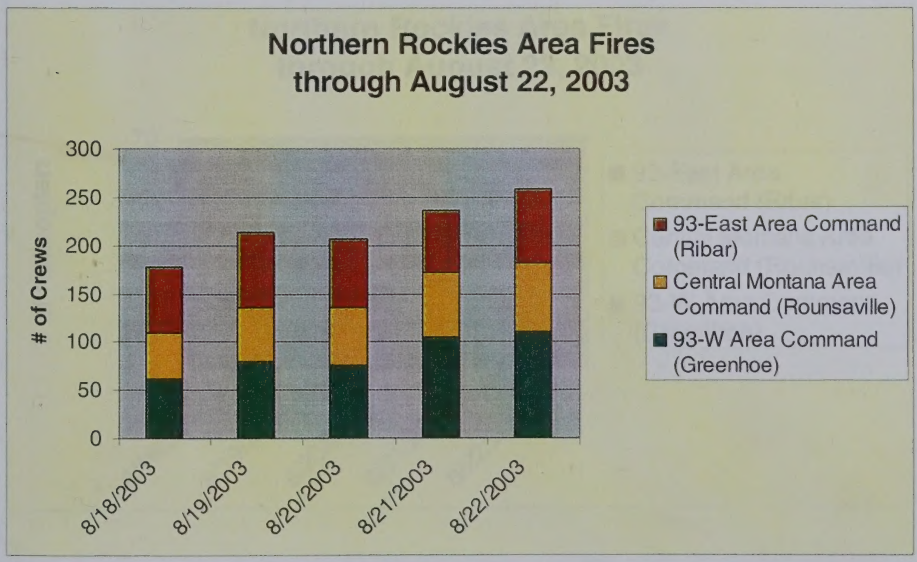

Northern Rockies Geographical Area Fires
Total Incident Cost Trends
8/18 - 8/22/03
M Dollars & Acres
Number
250,000
200,000
150,000
100,000
50,000
0
12,000
10,000
8,000
6,000
4,000
2,000
0
7,136
8,479
8,506
9,671
10,116
127,086
126,613
150,747
197,893
212,556
$35,155
$42,058
$49,338
$57,914
$67,279
8/18/03
8/19/03
8/20/03
8/21/03
8/22/03
Date
Total Costs
Acres Burn
Personnell

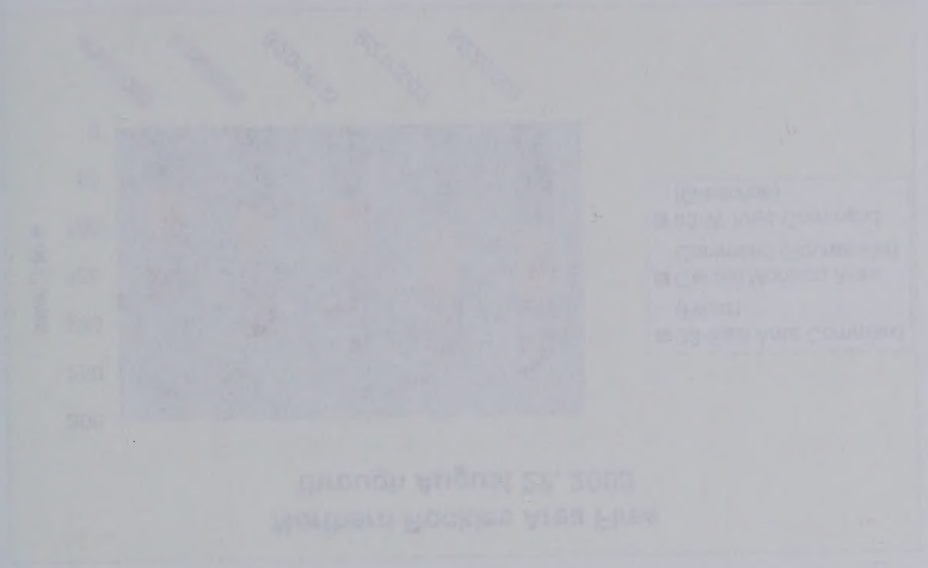


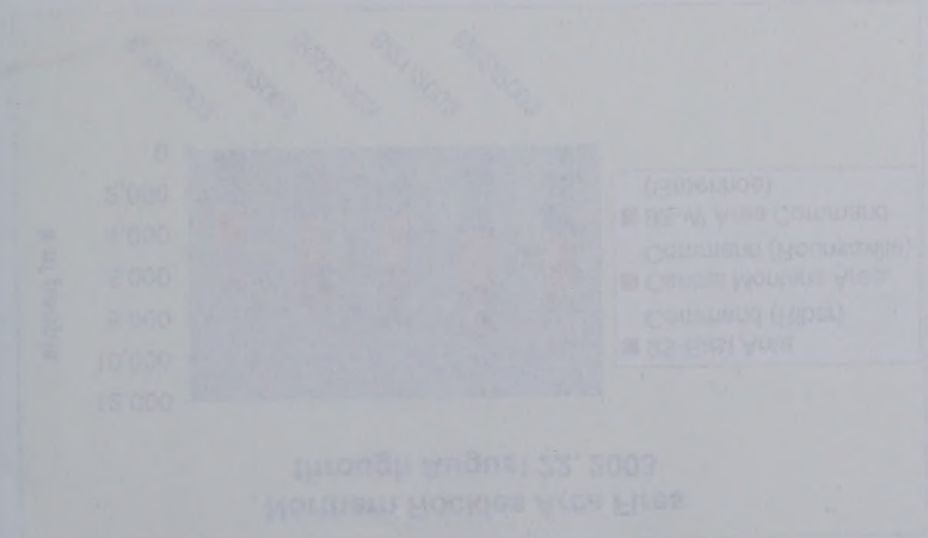

Northern Rockies Area Fires
through August 22, 2003
Costs-to-Date
80,000,000
70,000,000
60,000,000
50,000,000
40,000,000
30,000,000
20,000,000
10,000,000
0
8/18/2003
8/19/2003
8/20/2003
8/21/2003
8/22/2003
93-East Area Command (Ribar)
Central Montana Area Command (Rounsaville)
93-W Area Command (Greenhoe)

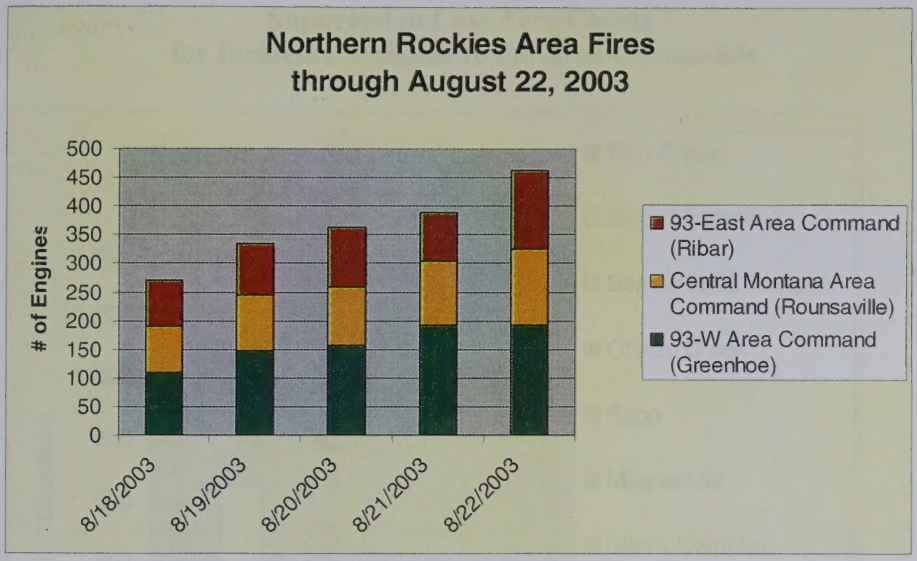

Northern Rockies Area Fires
through August 22, 2003
Acres Burned
250,000
200,000
150,000
100,000
50,000
0
8/18/2003
8/19/2003
8/20/2003
8/21/2003
8/22/2003
93-East Area Command (Ribar)
Central Montana Area Command (Rounsaville)
93-W Area Command (Greenhoe)

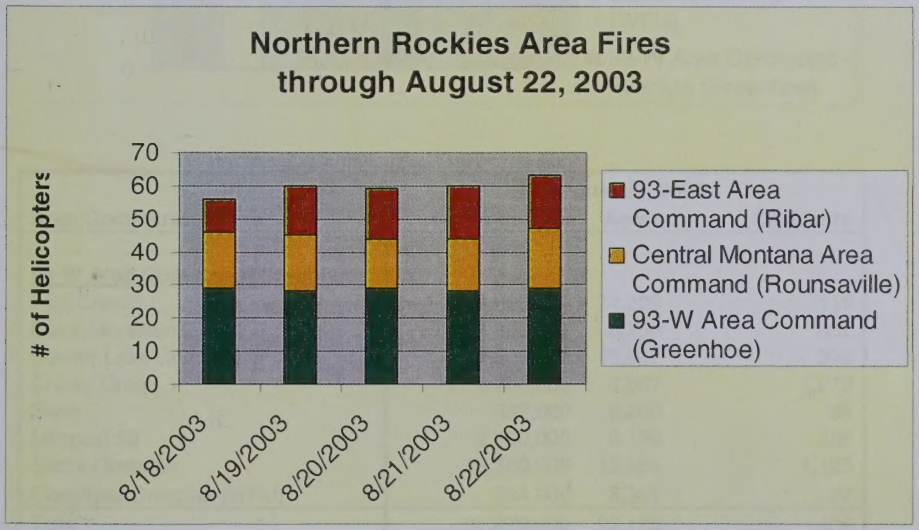

Northern Rockies Area Fires
through August 22, 2003
# of people
12,000
10,000
8,000
6,000
4,000
2,000
0
8/18/2003
8/19/2003
8/20/2003
8/21/2003
8/22/2003
93-East Area Command (Ribar)
Central Montana Area Command (Rounsaville)
93-W Area Command (Greenhoe)


Northern Rockies Area Fires
through August 22, 2003
# of Crews
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
8/18/2003
8/19/2003
8/20/2003
8/21/2003
8/22/2003
93-East Area Command (Ribar)
Central Montana Area Command (Rounsaville)
93-W Area Command (Greenhoe)

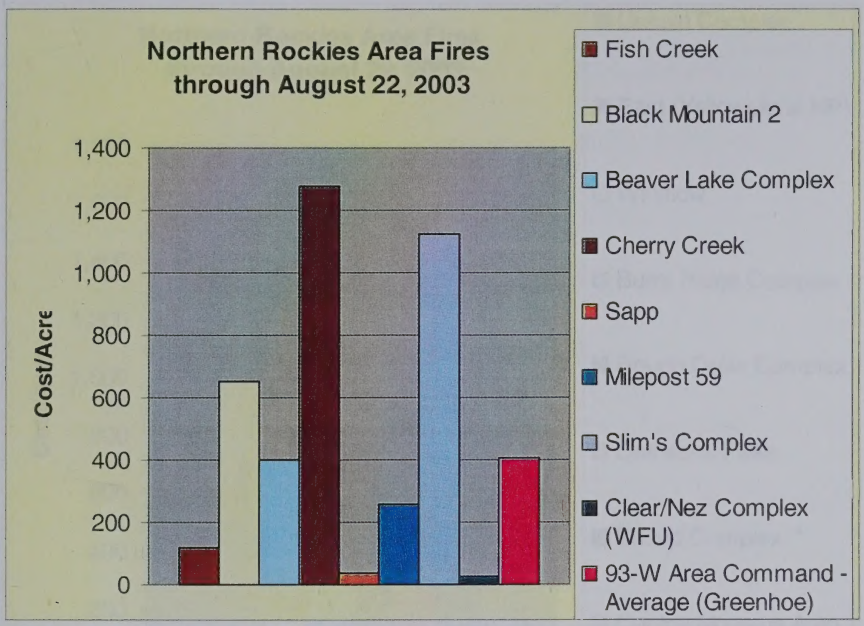




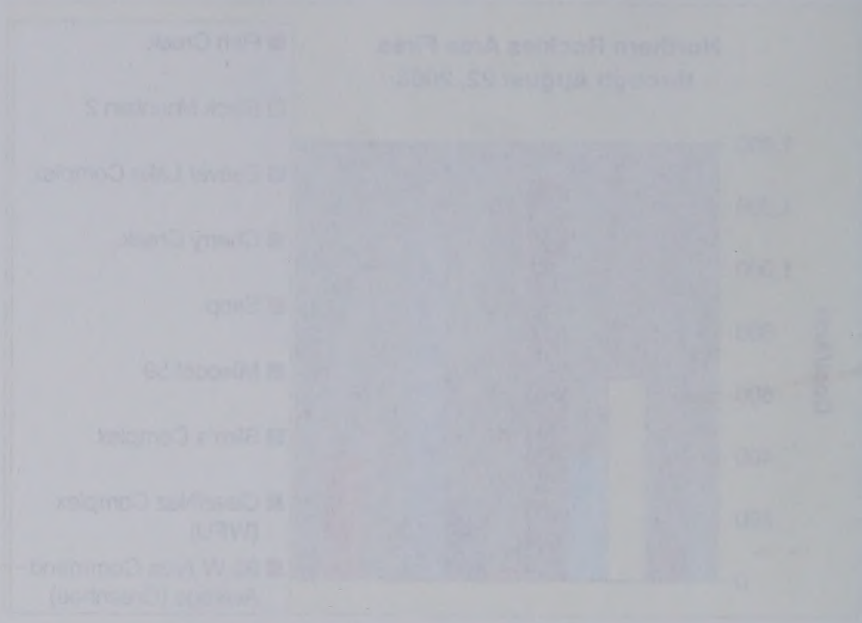

Northern Rockies Area Fires
through August 22, 2003
# of Engines
500
450
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
8/18/2003
8/19/2003
8/20/2003
8/21/2003
8/22/2003
93-East Area Command (Ribar)
Central Montana Area Command (Rounsaville)
93-W Area Command (Greenhoe)


Northern Rockies Area Fires
through August 22, 2003
# of Helicopters
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
8/18/2003
8/19/2003
8/20/2003
8/21/2003
8/22/2003
93-East Area Command (Ribar)
Central Montana Area Command (Rounsaville)
93-W Area Command (Greenhoe)

Suppression Cost/Acre Charts
for Incidents Assigned to the Area Commands

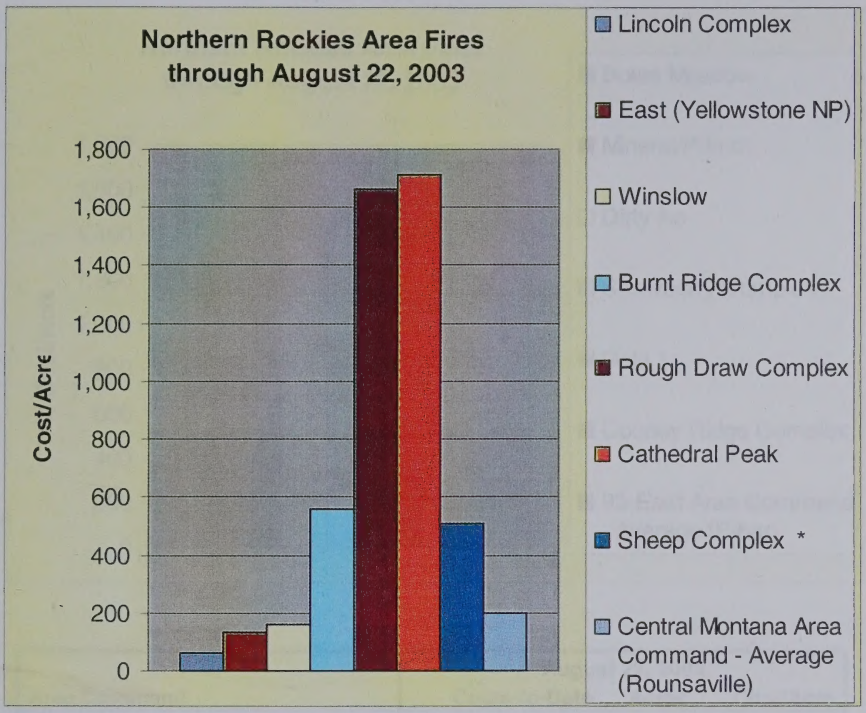


Area Command	August 22, 2003 Costs-to-Date	Acres	Cost/Acre
93-W Area Command (Greenhoe)			
Fish Creek	2,800,000	24,220	116
Black Mountain 2	4,400,000	6,750	652
Beaver Lake Complex	7,500,000	18,847	398
Cherry Creek	5,200,000	4,067	1,279
Sapp	352,000	9,200	38
Milepost 59	2,100,000	8,139	258
Slim's Complex	15,300,000	13,594	1,125
Clear/Nez Complex (WFU)	224,000	8,361	27
Total	37,876,000	93,178	406

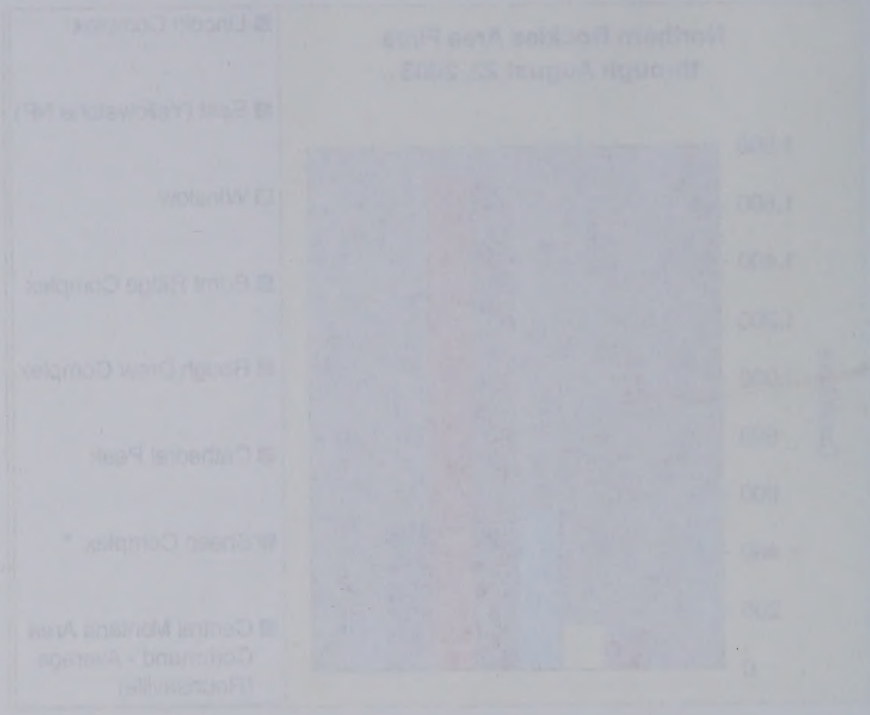


Area Command			
20 W Area Command (Dover PD)			
Fire Crews			
Police Motorcycle 2			
Beaver Lake Complex			
Cherry Creek			
Depot			
Hillwood 39			
Mike's Complex			
Cedarville Complex (WFPA)			
30 W Area Command (Sanford)			

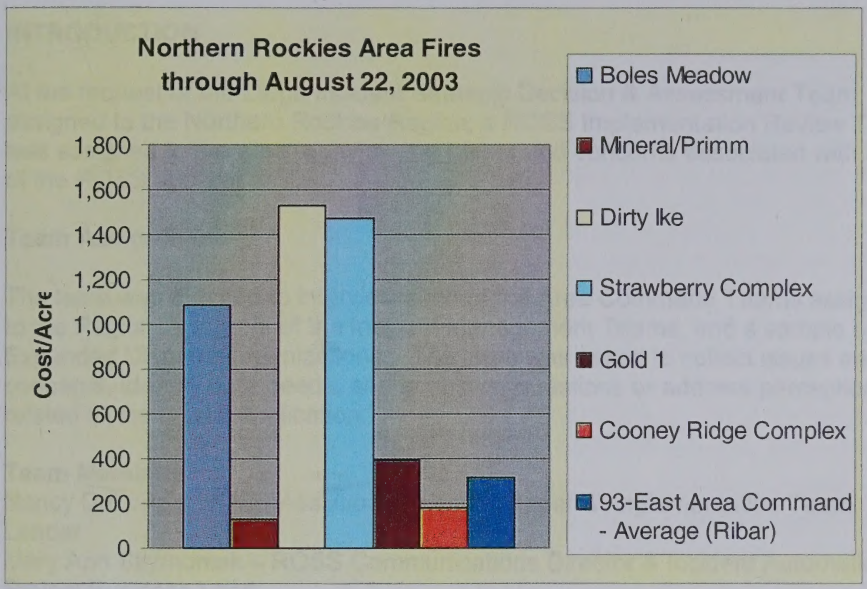
Suppression Cost/Acre Charts
for Incidents Assigned to the Area Commands



Area Command	August 22, 2003 Costs-to-Date	Acres	Cost/Acre
Central Montana Area Command (Rounsaville)			
Lincoln Complex	2,000,000	32,145	62
East (Yellowstone NP)	2,700,000	20,500	132
Winslow	1,600,000	10,115	158
Burnt Ridge Complex	903,000	1,614	559
Rough Draw Complex	4,300,000	2,588	1,662
Cathedral Peak	1,900,000	1,110	1,712
Sheep Complex *	423,000	833	508
Total	13,826,000	68,905	201



Suppression Cost/Acre Charts for Incidents Assigned to the Area Commands



Area Command	August 22, 2003 Costs-to-Date	Acres	Cost/Acre
93-East Area Command (Ribar)			
Boles Meadow	4,400,000	4,050	1,086
Mineral/Primm	2,100,000	16,000	131
Dirty Ike	1,300,000	850	1,529
Strawberry Complex	1,500,000	1,021	1,469
Gold 1	3,000,000	7,675	391
Cooney Ridge Complex	3,700,000	20,877	177
Subtotal	16,000,000	50,473	317

ROSS Implementation Review – Northern Rockies
August 22-26, 2003

INTRODUCTION

At the request of the Large Incident Strategic Decision & Assessment Team assigned to the Northern Rockies Region, a ROSS Implementation Review Team was assigned to the area to review the issues and concerns associated with use of the ROSS application.

Team Assignment

The team was directed to interview each of the Area Command Teams assigned to the Region, a sample of the Incident Management Teams, and a sample of the Expanded Dispatch organizations. The team was asked to collect issues and concerns, identify data needs, and to answer questions or address perceptions related to the ROSS application.

Team Members

Nancy DeLong – ROSS Assistant Project Manager & Implementation Team Leader
Mary Ann Szymoniak – ROSS Communications Director & Incident Automation Project Business Lead
Rochelle Piro – Business Requirements Analyst Lockheed Martin. (Lockheed Martin is the application development contractor)

Process

For the period August 21 through August 26 team members interviewed a number of people at each of the organizational levels including NR MAC, 93 West and 93 East Area Command, Central Montana Area Command, Northern Rockies Coordination Center, Missoula Dispatch, Missoula Expanded Dispatch, Bozeman Expanded Dispatch, two Type 1 and two Type 2 Incident Management Teams.

The team will also visit Kalispell Area Command and Grangeville Area Command. Visits to expanded Dispatch Offices or incidents will be determined based on input from the Area Commanders.

Comments have been recorded in a separate document that will be made part of the review file. A summary of findings has been prepared as part of this report. Names of people interviewed are the end of this report.

Background

ROSS, an interagency computer application, automates the resource ordering and status process used in dispatch and coordination offices nationwide.

Many offices used ROSS for Resource Status during the 2002 fire season. The Resource Ordering function of the application was released in the spring of 2003, and first used extensively to support the 2003 Southwest Area fire season. Several issues related to performance were identified during the initial use; performance and system tuning has been performed since then and new processors and servers were added to the ROSS equipment located at the National Information Technology Center (NITC) in Kansas City in response to these performance issues. New standard reports have been added to address needs identified by users, and one software update has been applied during the fire season to correct some issues that were causing users problems. Another update is in the testing stage, and will be ready to release to the field Fall 2003.

Additional software releases are scheduled over future years. These releases will both correct bugs and/or issues identified with the application or add functionality that was identified in the original NWCG ROSS charter.

The ROSS charter has specific requirements, and a detailed project plan that describes the tasks and priorities for development of the application. Some of the decisions made regarding the scope of the application (such as not including IMT use of ROSS), and funding issues (such as taking away WCF funds so that new equipment could not be purchased when originally planned) are directly related to issues identified during this fire season. In addition, business requirements established and approved for ROSS have changed significantly since the decision to proceed with the project was made in early 2000. *Continued development and ability to correct the issues identified this fire season is dependant on the project receiving the identified levels of funding. Recommendations or requirements not in the original charter will require additional funding.*

ROSS training sessions have been held in every geographic area over the past year, with approximately 1400 people receiving training. Several areas included their "militia" expanded dispatchers, others focused on providing training to their regular dispatch staff. A copy of the ROSS application is available for users to practice.

A "readiness review" checklist was prepared for dispatch offices to determine how prepared they were to begin dispatching with the ROSS application. This review was used at some offices and not at others.

ROSS has moved a tremendous number of orders this fire season. Data is available to managers that has never been available before.

ROSS "experts" were sent to a number of Geographic Area Coordination Centers, Local Dispatch Centers and Expanded Dispatch offices to assist users

with the use of ROSS beginning with the Southwest and continuing beyond the date of this report.

Topics, Discussion & Findings, Recommendations

Overall Findings: The majority of people we spoke with want to see ROSS succeed, and were pleased to have the opportunity to express their opinions on what types of improvements they would like to see. Many people recognized the fact that the application is in its first year of use for resource ordering, and improvements will be made. IMTs and Area Commands recognize the potential of ROSS to provide them data they have not previously had access to. However, following are some of the specific findings and issues people would like to see addressed:

Topic: Data Availability to MAC Groups, Area Commands and Incidents

Discussion and Findings: MACs, Area Commands and Incidents need data in order to make and support their decision-making processes.

Area Commands identified the need for data to prioritize resources; track where the crews are assigned, when resources 14 days are up, and the needs at each of the incidents.

Incidents identified the need for data regarding the status of their orders including pending, UTFs, cancellations, etc. They want to be able to see all of their requests without having to contact the expanded dispatch offices. They want demob date, travel information and to have data to help track assignment length.

MACs, Area Commands, and Incidents requested the capability to view data on their own without contacting Expanded Dispatch offices.

Recommendation: MACs, Incidents and Area Commands want, and would benefit from access to data from ROSS. The ROSS Project Team should work with Area Command and IMT staff representatives to assess the most preferred delivery method for their data needs. The team should determine an easy way to provide a report or view of the required data without causing additional performance impacts to the ROSS application.

Topic: Training

Discussion & Findings: Approximately 1400 people have been trained nationally, however when we interviewed people at the Area Commands, Incidents and Expanded Dispatch offices, very few had received ROSS training. Many non-fire employees told us they were unable to get support from their supervisors to attend ROSS training. Orders for "Dispatchers with ROSS knowledge" are not getting filled.

Lack of training caused inefficient or incorrect use of ROSS and caused ROSS to be blamed for issues that were people related (for example requests being incorrectly ordered, not tracking UTF/cancelled orders, not understanding the terminology etc.). Several users suggested an "expanded dispatch role" that only gave access to the screens required for an expanded dispatch office to process orders, thus allowing them to "get up to speed" more quickly.

Recommendations: ROSS Team should: **1.** Work with expanded dispatch personnel to look for ways to provide expanded dispatchers a way to quickly get up to speed to use the application, keeping in mind the fact that many of the people working in expanded dispatch will not have had training. **2.** Analyze the scope of issues identified during the season & determine where improvements or changes to the training sessions and materials can be made. **3.** Establish rapid response teams to work with Area Commands and IMTs during times of extreme activity to help these customers of dispatch understand ROSS, and provide them with ways to ask for or get the data they require. **4.** Geographic Areas should look for ways to provide "militia" employees ROSS training.

Topic: ROSS screen design & process

Discussion & Findings: The most common significant problem identified by expanded dispatchers was the design of the screens. Every local dispatcher we spoke with who were servicing multiple fires accidentally placed or filled orders on the wrong incident because the drop down menu on the screen shows an incident name that could be different from the screen shown below if they forget to filter. When an expanded dispatch office is supporting one or two incidents, or assigns one fire per dispatcher, the processing of orders on the correct incident appears to be *relatively* problem free; once a dispatcher is responsible for a number of incidents, the job complexity makes utilization of ROSS much more difficult.

Several suggestions were provided; many have been previously identified by the ROSS team, or through the ROSS suggestion process. All comments received in the review are captured in a separate document that will be provided to the ROSS Team. Some common issues identified during this review include:

- Rosters should be easier to use, particularly when members are unavailable.
- Need the ability to edit requests throughout the life of the order.
- When searching through lists, the application should take the user back to the last item used rather than the top of the screen.
- Need an easier way to place and flag name requests.
- Need the ability to create ad hoc reports with an easy to use tool.

- Dates on reports and resource orders need to have the current date and time.
- Need the ability to reassign and track aircraft more efficiently.
- Need the ability to link orders (i.e. aircraft with overhead; chainsaw, truck & operator etc.) this is particularly important for aircraft with overhead when the 48 hour kill policy is in place.
- Reduce the number of filters.
- Need an easier way to enter resources that are only used one time.
- When picking an incident all of the screens should apply to that incident.
- Need a "bookmark" or placeholder, so dispatchers can easily return to what they were working on.
- Want to be able to "select all" and select a range of numbers on the request status screen.
- Want a quicker way to print from the application (Brio slows up the process).
- Want consistency between screens and terminology.
- Want a category for availability – "team"

Recommendations: Thought should be given to creating time saving processes within ROSS. The ROSS Project Team needs to seriously consider all suggestions and include user community representatives in the discussions (dispatchers, IMTs and Area Commands). Items that are out of scope of the current charter should be assessed for feasibility, cost, funding availability, and timeframes.

Topic: Speed

Discussion & Findings: The workload at the local dispatch office is much greater than at any other level; ROSS is used locally for every process to support an incident. Because the workload is do great, and so time critical, speed of the application is very important to these users.

All expanded dispatchers interviewed identified the time it takes to open a screen or do any process as being too time consuming. Recently the "worm virus" has been affecting the networks, causing serious slow downs. The amount of time it takes to do any process is causing frustrations to users who are very busy and don't want to wait for the computer. Users don't care if the cause of the slowness is the network or the application; they just want it to be faster.

The speed and time it takes to open screen or access data is inconsistent and very dependent on external factors related to the networks. Tuning has been done and will continue to be done on the ROSS application, but the network issues are beyond the control of the project team.

One expanded dispatch added 18-20 additional terminals, all running ROSS – it is unclear if this is effecting the slowness since all of these terminals, along with 8 -10 unit dispatchers were all going through the same network to the outside world. This office appeared to be slower than the others we visited.

Recommendations: **1**. The ROSS Project Team needs assistance from management to engage the Departmental and/or Agency CIOs in the Wide Area Network (WAN) issue. **2**. The ROSS Project Team needs to ensure the application is running as fast as possible. They should assess the application to determine where performance, speed and usability issues can be improved. **3**. If possible and relevant, develop and publish recommended Local Area Network (LAN) sizing guidelines for use at local offices.

Topic: Business Practices

Discussion & Findings: A number of business practices were identified as causing problems for expanded dispatchers, IMTs and Area Commands. Even though Area Commands and incidents were not included in the original scope of the ROSS project, it needs to be recognized that they are the customers and their needs should be included. Some business practice issues are geographic area specific, others are national in scope. All comments received in the review are captured in a separate document that will be provided to the ROSS Team. Examples include:

- People have quit using the phones, we need to emphasize that just because the automated system is being used, that we still need to make phone calls.
- 48 hour kill policy (13.5 National Mob Guide) – Area Commands & expanded dispatchers would like the ability to easily track orders that are killed so they can be reordered if necessary
- The processes at NICC, where bottleneck continues to occur
- Name requests
- Ties to the ISuite application and data standards between ROSS & ISuite
- The ability for Area Command to control resources within their delegated authority without reassigning through the Geographic Coordination Centers by allowing selection area to be defined by incident.
- The ability to "laterally place" orders to the BUYT and/or allow them access to the application so they can enter fill information.
- A link to EERA data; concerns about contract information being entered properly.
- Want to ensure there is a link from IQCS when it is developed so that quals can be automatically updated between ROSS and IQCS.

Recommendations: **1**. ROSS Business Lead should review the charter with the appropriate individuals to determine if the scope should be modified to include ROSS use at the incident level. **2.** The NWCG, NICC and the Business Communities need to seriously consider business practice changes that will make resource management more efficient and cost effective. **3**. The ROSS Project Team and Incident Automation Project Team should work with the Incident Business community to coordinate the standards between ISuite and ROSS; and to look at processes to place orders with the Buying Teams, and look for ways to access EERA data more easily. The ROSS Project Team should: **4.** Management should formalize an approved process for dealing with name requests. **5**. Work with IMT members (particularly SUPL, ORDM, LSC) to identify standard reports that would be beneficial to them. **6**. Determine if there is a way to set the selection area "by incident" to assist Area Commanders deal with resources within their delegated areas of responsibility.

Topic: ROSS Bugs

Discussion & Findings: Some of the problems identified by ROSS users are known bugs or identified issues. Many are either in the next update release, or are identified in the change management process. Some of the most common complaints that are in the process of being addressed were: the ability to provide a block of numbers to incidents, problems with the crew/team roster, access to data by non-dispatchers (incident or Area Command personnel), canned reports formats & the type of data in the canned reports, the ability to select multiple incidents in reports.

An update that is currently in the testing stage will be released in the fall of 2004.

Recommendations: Continue with release of the next ROSS update; prioritize additional planned changes and enhancements with critical suggestions from this season and communicate results with users.

General Recommendation: Prepare an Action Plan to document how the findings from this review will be addressed.

Commendations: Despite the issues users identified; expanded dispatchers, IA dispatchers and Coordination Centers are doing an outstanding job of processes resource orders and making ROSS work for them.

Names of People Contacted:

Northern Rockies Coordination Center:
- Mike Plattes,
- Ray Nelson,
- Colleen Finneman

Northern Rockies GMAC staff:
- Tracey Nimlos, GMAC Coordinator,
- Pam Snyder,
- Kim Linse,
- Jolyn Wiggins,
- Shirley Sutliffe (GMAC special projects)

93 East Area Command:
- Micki Coonrod - Aviation
- Nick Greear – Plans
- Ron Coates – Logistics
- Eric Heyn – Logistics for Cooney Ridge

Large Incident Strategic Decision & Assessment Team
- Steve Ellis, Forest Supervisor/District Manger Lakeview FS & BLM
- DeDe Domingos – AO Lakeview FS/BLM
- Harry Croft – WO NFP
- Jack Sater – IBA – several fires in the area
- Sandy Evenson – Center Manager Missoula Dispatch
- Khon Viengkham – Budget Analyst – WO FAM
- Melissa Simons, WO, FS
- John Delatorre – Budget Officer R5, FS

Cooney Ridge Fire
- Bob Sandman, IC
- Bill Caldwell FSC
- Kathy Shelton, IBA for several fires in the area
- Gary Vallieres, CTSP
- Susan Ague, SUPL
- Bill Lauer, ORDM

93 West Area Command
- Greg Greenhoe – Area Commander
- Tom Bedow - Aviation
- Steve Holden, Deputy Logistics
- Rich Wands
- Steve Pedigo

Names of People Contacted Con't.

Mineral Prim Complex T1
- Wally Bennett – IC
- Mike Kopitzky, PSC and Deputy IC
- Dave Price – PSC
- Gary Rahm – DPSC
- Ted Giesey – LSC
- Roger Gowan - FSC
- Holly Carr – ORDM
- Teresa Krueger – ORDM
- Dave Jones – SUPL
- Shane DelGrosso – FBAN

Missoula Dispatch Center and Expanded Dispatch
- Tom McGlaughlin (ED)
- Cliff Snider (ED)
- Mary Gausen (ED) (all of the above are members of a CA Dispatch Team)
- Sandy Evanson, Center Manager
- Tony Lubke (MDC)
- Kristine Salmonson (MDC)

Gold 1 Incident – T2
- John Philbin – IC
- Andrea Wojtasek – Finance
- Ann Bastion – FSC
- Steve Stone – LSC
- Marie Butler – ORDM

Bozeman Dispatch Center
- Gaylen Yeates – Center Manager

Bozeman Expanded Dispatch
- Dave Schafer – Coordinator
- Debbie Gilbert – Supervisor
- Betty Sneddon – Expanded Dispatcher
- Kathrine Lopez – Expanded Dispatcher

Central Montana Area Command
- Marc Rounsaville – Area Commander
- Buck Latapie – Deputy Area Commander
- Bob Meuchel – Ass't Area Commander – Plans
- Tom Hamilton – Ass't Area Commander – Logistics
- Mike Campbell – Area Command Aviation Coordinator

Names of People Contacted Con't.

Cathedral Peak Incident – T1

Larry Humphries – IC
Jeff Whitney, Deputy IC
Chuck Sundt – FACL
Jack Gothard – SUPL
Al Collar – ORDM
Rocky Kloster –CTSP
Ruth Kohler – PLANS
Susan Lee – FSC1 (t)
Victor Montoya - EQTR
Debbie Alger – Status Check-in

Example

Cost Containment Summary

Boles Meadow Fire MT-SWS-151
Central Oregon Incident Management Team -- Chris Hoff, IC

Decision	Action / Analysis	Old Cost Unit	Quantity	Unit of Measure	New Unit Cost	Total Cost Save
Find low cost solution for water (gray and potable) while still providing for fire fighter sanitation and comfort	Purchased a potable water holding tank to provide reserve supply to the state kitchen instead of hiring an additional water tender. Savingsof $840.00 per day starting on 8/18/03 minus the $270. original cost	$840		Day	270	$840 pd
	Demobed additional gray water $492 truck (E-5) which was costing $492 per day to be on call to pump the kitchen. Utilized gray water truck E-50 (Ben Poria Shower) to service both shower and kitchen. Demobed on 8/15.	492		day		492/day
Working to change to the open checkbook mentality that had become the norm for IMT's	Analyze all significant expenditures. Any orders out of the norm are approved by finance.					
Commissary	Crews requested commissary services. We provided thru ordering process as opposed to ordering a commissary	1500	14	days	0	21000
Provide safe access. Use MgCl dust abatement to replace water trucks to control dust on 16.25 miles of fire access road	9 day analysis period, high cost of hauling water, limited availability of water trucks, ready availability of abatement product, most cost effective option with long term benefit thru rehab and extended mop up. $1000	2000	14	Days	56,000	37,000

	average cost per tender for single shift. Dust abatement would require double shift on water tenders.					
DNRC wrote agreements at incident	*DNRC was willing to sign up local resources at the incident, so resources were assigned to the incident quickly. This allowed us to implement Suppression cost alternative A as listed in the WFSA, direct attack. Shortening the time the team needs to be here.*					*1,300,000*
Utilize State Kitchen provided by DNRC	*State kitchen costs about 50% of the national contract kitchen*					*118,000*
Fight fire aggressively	*Maximize utilization of resources and implement aggressive strategies and tactics that reduce the number of days to containment and control a wildland fire.*	*500,000*	*3*	*days*	*0*	*1,500,000*
Using local resources whenever possible.	*Assessing the costs of resources when making mobilization and demobilization decisions.*					*300,000*
Team drove to the incident in government vehicles.	*Cost saving airfare costs, and having vehicles available at the incident.*	*102,000*	*14*	*Days*	*20,000*	*82,000*
Supplemental foods to firefighters	*Supplemental food policy is being implemented, and costs are watched closely. Minimum supplemental foods are available for firefighters.*					*30,000*
Team trailers and plotters	*The team brings a plotter for mapping and orders a GIS person, resulting in a cost savings by not ordering a mobile GIS unit*	*5000*	*14*	*Days*		*70,000*
10 laptop computers carried with the team	*Computers were rented earlier this season at a monthly rate.*	*3400*		*Month*		*3400*

Example

Appendix 3

Large Fire Cost Tickler List

- Emphasize the user of Prescribed Fire and Fire use. Treat large areas of mosaics to help create areas of reduced fire intensity.
- Fund preparedness resources to maintain an efficient Initial Attack organization.
- Prioritize suppression objectives. When resources are short concentrate on protecting life and values at risk. De-emphasize perimeter control.
- Maintain a daily dialog between IMT, FMO and Agency Administrator.
- Consider managing a fire at a lower complexity level. Use more Type 3 organizations and manage complexity.
- Staff the fire where the fire will threaten suppression objectives - guerrilla tactics.
- Use FARSITE and other tools to move resources to areas that threaten control objectives. Un-staff those sections of line where the threat is several burning periods away.
- Better manage the risk associated with implementing less than full suppression on all divisions at all times. Reward good decisions and risk taking.
- No incentive to hit a fire hard as we always have a safety net. Initial and Extended Attack is the key to large fire costs.
- A lot of our tactics are not working in the current drought situation. We need to change tactics and strategies. Choose "the best ridge", not "the next ridge".
- Regional oversight of the WFSA and team delegation. Are teams doomed to fail by being asked to accomplish objectives that are unobtainable or unrealistic?
- Consider the best tools for the job. Equipment, use, water handling and night operations.
- Need more Incident Business Advisors with greater authorities.
- WFSA is the key. Need to consider the "least cost alternative".
- Better predictive services tools – when is the season going to end? Will help us in our risk assessment.
- Reevaluate the WFSA to more clearly show cost decisions and the weight given to them.
- We have to get away from the appearance of an open checkbook. Look at ways to allocate suppression dollars and hold Agency Administrators to keep within their budget.
- Better manage, at the geographic level, high cost resources.
- Quickly demob ineffective resources.
- Better manage aviation resources. Use on Initial Attack and Extended Attack fires. Minimize use on large and mega fires. Demob if not needed.
- Consider cost when prioritizing the release of resources.
- Minimize the use of motels and other travel costs when mobilizing resources.
- Use more spike camps to reduce travel and aviation time.
- Minimize the holding of resources on incidents for "what if?" situations.
- Complete Unit Fire Management Plans so appropriate suppression responses and fire use can be implemented where appropriate.
- Evaluate the need for expensive equipment and support on incidents. Release these resources.
- Minimize spending for the sake of politics. Be up front with the public.
- Better manage supply requests.
- Better educate line personnel on the use of available equipment (forwarders, skidders, escavators, skidgens, dozers, clippers, etc.).
- Monitor use of specialized equipment, demob or remove from pay status when not needed.
- Limit the amount of equipment in staging; take some risk.
- Question the se of name requests when local resources available.
- Pressure should be put on home units to provide local resources.
- Increase intermediate supervision (strike team/ task force leaders).

Example

- Improve coordination and management of resources on multi-team incidents to prevent hording of resources.
- Consider the extension of personnel assigned to 21 days when fatigue can be managed and costs will be lowered.
- Teams and Dispatch manage the use/need of rental vehicles and personal cell phones.
- Work with municipalities in developing/establishing fuel breaks.
- Monitor suppression resources on large fires to assess degree to which they are productively engaged. Minimize number of resources held in reserve not being engaged.
- Define criteria during which suppression responses would occur (time of year; expected weather changes).